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ISLAMIST INSURGENCIES, DIASPORIC SUPPORT NETWORKS, AND THEIR HOST STATES: The Case of the Algerian GIA in Europe 1993-2000

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8) ABSTRACT

Globalisation and transnational migration have increased the impact of insurgencies overseas on European security. The presence of a significant Muslim diaspora in Europe, and the emergence of Islamist support networks in Europe for insurgencies in North Africa, the Middle East and Asia pose a number of policy dilemmas for Western governments. This report offers an empirical exploration of the insurgent-support network of the Algerian Islamist insurgents, with a focus on the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA). A theoretical framework for understanding insurgent strategies vis-à-vis the sanctuary or host state is presented, emphasising the difficult trade-off between maximising the benefits of sanctuary and reducing friction with the host states. The case study of the Algerian GIA's sanctuary strategies offers particular insight into an insurgent movement's decision to turn to violence against the sanctuary state. It appears that a specific set of coincidental factors contributed to this decision. They included a declining value of the sanctuary due to police repression, a critical stage in the domestic insurgency, and a finally, the insurgent movement's perception that the disruption of sanctuary state – host state relations was critical to the outcome of the insurgency. In general, this study underlines the value of the sanctuary model for understanding the phenomenon of international terrorism by overseas insurgent movements.

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ISLAMIST INSURGENCIES, DIASPORIC SUPPORT NETWORKS, AND THEIR HOST STATES: The Case of the Algerian GIA in Europe 1993-2000

1 INTRODUCTION

Popular themes in current international relations studies are the growing importance of transnationalism, the empowerment of non-state actors, and the alleged decline — or at least transformation — of the state.[*][1] In conflict studies, more attention has been devoted to diasporas as a third force in what was previously mostly a two-level game between two contending states or a state and an insurgent group.[2] Increased transnational migration, improved communications, and the new 'power of identity'[3] have increased the impact of violent conflicts overseas on domestic European politics. One of the most immediate concerns is centred on what we may term *insurgency support activities* or *support networks* among immigrants and diaspora communities. Extensive fundraising, arms smuggling and recruitment efforts for one of the contending parties in a violent conflict overseas pose a number of problems for host states, home states as well as the diaspora community itself. Such activities impact not only on host state - home state relations, but they also create significant strains on host state - diaspora relations, complicate asylum and integration policies and invite undesired foreign intelligence operations directed towards activists in the diaspora communities. Criminal violence associated with support networks such as criminal fund-raising and intimidation jeopardizes the general status and safety of immigrants. On the other hand, heavy-handed suppression of all manifestations of low-profile pro-insurgency activity on behalf of a popular rebel movement will easily alienate significant segments of the diaspora from the host state.

This study does not aim at providing a comprehensive discussion of the role of insurgency support activities in the complicated and triangular relationship between homeland - host state-diaspora community. Instead, we offer a largely empirical study of support activities in Europe for overseas Islamist insurgencies, with a specific focus on the *political and strategic considerations* underlying these support efforts from the perspective of radical Islamist insurgent movements. This fills an important gap not only in the general political violence literature, but also in our knowledge of modern political Islamism. Existing studies on radical Islamism have tended to focus either on its ideological aspects or on the domestic

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[1] See for example Strange (1996), Van Creveld (1991) and Sheffer (1995).
[2] See for example Shain & Wittes (2001).
[3] Manuell Castells' phrase in his the second volume of his famous *The Information Age*. See Castells (1997).

confrontation with the state.[4] Scholars have largely ignored the topic of radical Islamist support networks.[5]

1.1 Radical Islamists as Rational Insurgents?

Political Islamism can be defined as a political ideology and organised movements (espousing the ideology of Islamism), whose common denominator is the call for an Islamic state governed according to the principles of *al-Shari'ah,* the non-codified Islamic law, emanating from the Koran and the Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad.[6] In this study we make a loose distinction between radical and mainstream Islamism where radical Islamism is characterised by its explicit willingness to employ violence for political ends.

In terrorism studies, Islamist radicals are increasingly being described as the arch type of the so-called "new terrorism".[7] They are often portrayed as belonging to a global network of semi-autonomous groups acting in loose co-operation, carrying out acts of violence against the U.S. and other 'enemies of Islam'. They are considered more violent-prone than secular terrorists, since the very legitimisation for violence emanates from religious *fatwa*s often issued by blind and fanatic *shaykh*s, not from a wider constituency of supporters. Radical Islamists, it is alleged, are fanatical, irreconcilable and inherently violent. Their acts defy the logic of rational cost-benefits calculations. Attempts at identifying any rationality or political-strategic considerations behind their actions, beyond furthering the Islamic revolution, appear futile. For example, it has been argued, "rational actor theory cannot but misinterpret Islamic fundamentalism because rational actor assumptions and the rationalist worldview of which they are an expression, exclude fundamentalists' own conceptions of human nature and action".[8] Not surprisingly, political scientists descend rarely into this messy world of hearsay, propaganda and irrationality.

In this study, we argue against the notion of an irrational Islamist radicalism, which has little in common with other rebel and insurgent movements, and which cannot be understood by more general theories on insurgencies. In order to make a case against the uniqueness of Islamist insurgencies we will use the example of the Algerian *Armed Islamic Group* ('Groupe Islamique Armée' - GIA), often portrayed as the most irrational, fanatic and brutal of all Islamist insurgent organisations. (Its use of violence has been described as "random butchery", "deadly madness", "senseless" and "beyond comprehension"[9].) However, we will show how the GIA's activities and operations in Europe actually conform to more general theories of

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[4] See for example Shahin (1997), Esposito (1997), Willis (1996), Maddy-Weitzman & Inbar (1996), Burgat & Dowell (1993); Kepel (1995); and Ayubi (1991). Two examples are the journalistic accounts offered by Labévière (2000) and Sfeir (1997).

[5] As far as we can ascertain there exist only a few journalistic accounts. Three examples of this genre are Bodansky (1999), Reeve (1999) and Labèviére (2000), but they offer little to the academic understanding of the subject of Islamist support networks. Terrorism studies have often been journalistic in style and "not research-based in any rigorous sense". Especially with regard to international terrorism theoretical works are nearly absent. For a review of the state of the art of the literature on causes of terrorism, see Lia & Skjølberg (2000). The quotation is from Schmid & Jongman (1988), p. 179.

[6] For works on political Islamism, see footnote 4.

[7] See Bodansky (1999), Hoffman (1998), Laqueur (1998) and Lesser et al (1999).

[8] Euben (1995), p. 157.

[9] Kalyvas (1999), p. 243, referring to *Time* 6 October 1997); *L'Humanité* 15 September 1998; Ganley (1997); and Smith (1998).

insurgent strategies vis-à-vis support networks in exile (external sanctuaries) and relations with host countries (sanctuary state). Far from lashing out blindly in all directions against perceived 'enemies of Islam', the GIA has adopted a coherent, albeit unsuccessful strategy during the 1990s in order to maximise the advantages of its relative freedom of action in Europe – for the benefit of the domestic insurgency in Algeria. We argue that radical Islamist movements by and large conceptualise Europe within an *'enemy territory' – 'sanctuary'* dichotomy, in which European host countries, though often portrayed as "enemies" and "the mother of all evil" in Islamist ideological thinking, serve mainly as 'sanctuaries', due to practical considerations and tactical imperatives.[10] However, in 1995 the GIA attributed strategic importance to armed operations in France. Elsewhere, armed operations were rare; when they did occur, they were primarily a tactical instrument used in response to police crackdowns; for example, shots were fired to escape detainment, or threats of violence were issued to raise the costs of host countries' extradition of GIA-operatives to less friendly countries. It seems clear, therefore, that European countries have become strategic targets for armed operations by radical Islamists only under very specific circumstances. This happened when three factors coincided, namely (i) the utility of the European sanctuary for the rebels was declining, (ii) the rebels experienced a critical phase or turning point in the Algerian civil war, and finally, (iii) the disruption of outside assistance from the sanctuary state to the enemy regime was deemed critical and seemed possible. The costs of such operations were deemed too high to be sustained, and have therefore only been actively pursued in shorter periods. In general, the patterns of the GIA in-exile activities can therefore be interpreted using a rational actor model of insurgent sanctuary strategies.[11]

1.2   A Note on Sources

There are good reasons to take a fresh look at Algerian radical Islamism and its support networks in the diaspora. Recent studies have provided new insights into the dynamics and logic guiding the use of violence by radical Islamists in Algeria proper[12]. Moreover, the extensive police operations against radical Islamists in Europe, as well as court cases already finished or still underway, have provided much new, open source information on the activities of these movements. Both factors enable us to go beyond speculation and hearsay, in order to make an analysis of the role of European-based support-networks, which is a truly neglected aspect of Islamist insurgencies in the post-Cold War World. It should be emphasised that much of the information upon which the empirical case study is based originates from European police sources via press reports. Police sources have on several occasions turned out to be biased.[13] Whenever possible, information from police sources has thus been compared with other available sources, such as testimonies during trials by former and present GIA-members, as well as GIA communiqués. The latter have also been useful in discerning shifts in GIA's European strategies.

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[10] The quotation is from *GIA Communique* No.44 dated 21 May 1996.

[11] Obviously, the rational actor perspective does not exclude the use of massive and brutal violence, but predicates that cost-benefit calculations , not ideological/religious imperatives, are the basis for the use of violence.

[12] See in particular Kalyvas (1999) and Bedjaoui (1999).

[13] For instance, in July 2000, a French judge ruled that the police had fabricated proof against Moussa Kraouche, the leader of the Algerian Brotherhood (FAF) in France, trying to make it look as if he was a GIA-member. See "French judge rules police framed Algerian militant," *Reuters* 6 July 2000.

This study is divided into two main parts. The first part is devoted to a more general discussion of the new Muslim diaspora in Europe, the rise of Islamist movements and insurgency support activities as a contentious issue in host state - diaspora relations. The second part is mainly a case study of the Algerian *Armed Islamic Group* (GIA). We identify the scope of its activities and analyse the shifts in its strategies from its emergence as one of the major Algerian insurgent groups between 1993 and 2000.

2   THE MUSLIM DIASPORA IN EUROPE

The presence of a considerable Muslim population in Western European countries — ca 11,5 mill in the EEC countries in 1995[14] — is mainly a consequence of recent voluntary immigration of workers, and to a lesser extent, influx of refugees from civil wars and political conflicts coming from the Middle East, North Africa or South Asia.[15] Their administrative status has varied greatly from illegal immigrants, non-citizen guest workers (in Germany) to citizens (mostly in France and Britain). Until the late 1980s, the Muslim diaspora by and large kept a low profile. However, through upward social mobility, and partly 'brain drain' from Third World Muslim countries, a Muslim intelligentsia has slowly emerged in Europe, calling for a larger degree of recognition of the Muslim presence.

Muslims in the EEC countries in 1991(estimates)			
State	*Total population*	*Muslim population (estimates only)*	*% Muslims*
France	56,9 mill	4 mill	7,0
Belgium	10,0 mill	450,000	4,5
Germany	79,5 mill	2,5 mill	3,1
The Netherlands	33,6 mill	450,000	3,0
Greece	10,2 mill	300,000	2,9
United Kingdom	57,7 mill	1,5 mill	2,6
Luxembourg	380,000	10,000	2,6
Denmark	5,1 mill	100,000	1,9
Austria	7,8 mill	120,000	1,5
Sweden	8,6 mill	100,000	1,2
Norway	4,3 mill	50,000	1,2
Spain	38,4 mill	350,000	0,9
Italy	58 mill	400,000	0,7
Ireland	3,5 mill	20,000	0,6
Portugal	10,5 mill	20,000	0,2
Total	365,9 mill	10,370,000	2,8

Table 2.1 Muslims in EEC countries in 1991.[16]

During the 1980s and early 1990s a multifaceted crisis affected the Muslim diaspora in Europe in general and in France in particular, who hosted the largest Muslim diaspora in Europe of nearly 4 million, representing 7 % of the population. The crisis involved unemployment, xenophobia, disintegration of family units, and a wider identity crisis The latter issue of identity was accentuated by specific issues like the Rushdie affair, the dispute over the right to

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[14] Shadid & Van Koningsveld (1996a), p.14.
[15] Roy (2000).
[16] M Ali Kettani in Shadid & Van Koningsveld (1996a), p.15. Other and somewhat lower estimates are given in Vertovec & Peach (1997), pp.14-16.

wear a veil in French schools, repercussions of the Gulf war, the rise of the *Islamic Salvation Front* (FIS) in Algeria, cut short by the military coup in January 1992 and the ensuing Algerian civil war, and finally, the European involvement in the war on the Balkans. In different ways, these events contributed to a heightened consciousness of Muslim identity in the diaspora in Europe. Islam has become one of the main elements in the identity formation of immigrant communities from Muslim countries, with the mosque being the diaspora's perhaps most important institution.[17]

The evolution of Muslim identity in the European Muslim diaspora is outside the scope of this study. Suffice to note that the Muslim diaspora, although extremely multifaceted and heterogeneous, has acquired certain cultural and identity traits of its own that are at odds with both the official Islam of their home countries and the political Islamism of the opposition. Yet Muslim immigrants are still a diaspora, far from assimilated into the mainstream secular culture and identity of the European host countries. The renowned French scholar on Islamism, Olivier Roy, has succinctly noted

> "a process of acculturation is underway, even if it does not lead to integration, but to other patterns of differences. The *beur* (slang for Arab) culture of the suburbs of France has nothing to do with Islam or even with Arab culture: the slang (verlan) is French, the diet and the clothing are American (Mc Donald's and baseball caps), the music is Western (rap, 'hip-hop')."[18]

Apart from the acculturation process, there are important political forces affecting the Muslim diaspora in Europe. Both home countries and host states have to varying degrees perceived the Muslim diaspora as a potential threat and have strived to keep it under control. In particular, the Islamic associations in the diaspora in Europe, although originally formed in response to local demands, "have increasingly become targets of the homeland state authorities' efforts at gaining more control over the diaspora in Europe."[19] Saudi Arabia has won considerable influence in Muslim diasporas worldwide through its massive sponsorship of mosques, Islamic schools, Islamic missionary organisations, and Islamic news media and has used this leverage to silence criticism of the Saudi Monarchy. With the growth of a Turkish diaspora in Europe, the Turkish state decided to compete with the independent Islamic associations in both Germany and France. Turkey has made concerted efforts to systematically organise religious life of the Turkish diaspora in Germany through the formation of 'The Religious Authority Turkish-Islamic Associations' (DITIB), among other bodies.[20] Enhanced control over the Turkish diaspora was achieved through a variety of measures, including the appointment of *imam*s, the organisation of the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina (*hajj*), and the integration of religious education with the teaching of the mother tongue, which was administered by the Turkish state. Turkey's practice of posting imams in France, Germany as well as in other European countries reflected the foreign policy objective of "oppos[ing] political Islam which is against Turkey's interests" as one DITIB official put it.[21] "The

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[17] Kepel (1997), pp.150ff, and Mossaad (1995), pp.201ff.
[18] See Roy (2000). See also Nielsen (1999) and Leveau in (Vertovec & Peach (1997).
[19] Pedersen (1999), pp.24ff.
[20] Pedersen (1999), p.25
[21] Pedersen's interview with DITIB officials in May 1990, cited in Pedersen (1999), p.33.

politicising Islamic groups constitute a potential political problem that needs to be taken very seriously".[22] Similarly, maintaining some degree of control over the Muslim diaspora in Europe, especially with regard to politico-religious influences in the diaspora through appointments of imams, control of diaspora associations and political surveillance have remained an important policy objective for the Moroccan, Tunisian and Algerian governments.

2.1   The Emergence of Islamist Organisations in the Diaspora

Parallel to the reassertion of Muslim identity among immigrants in Europe from the late 1980s, there has been a remarkable proliferation of associations, espousing to Islamist ideologies a varying degree. The French sociologist Gilles Kepel has described the role of these new associative structures partly as a spontaneous response of communal self-help and partly as a response to a perceived need for community spokesmen for a previously marginalized, but increasingly assertive Muslim diaspora. From their establishment, the new Islamist associations have served "as *fonction tribunicienne,* a 'mouthpiece function', to express the frustration, hopes and demands of marginalized youth."[23] Another reason for the growing popularity of Islamism lay in the dilemma that the multitude of cultures in which Islam was embedded (in the immigrants' homelands) divided rather than united Muslims in the diaspora. The so-called *salafist* trend in the Islamist movement seemed to offer one way out of this dilemma. The *salafists* stressed the return to an authentic Islam (of the forefathers, *salafiyyun*), i e an Islam divested from local traditions and superstitions. They sought to create non-ethnic mosques and communities. To bypass cultural divisions, brought by pristine cultures, the *salafist*s tended to advocate either the use of the host country's language or standard classical Arabic. This approach represented an attempt to recreate an Islamic community of believers in Europe rather than assimilate or adopt a more liberal Islam.

A third factor behind the rise of Islamism as a significant ideology in the Muslim diaspora was the general strengthening of links between the diaspora and the home countries, including their domestic Islamist opposition movements. The relatively embryonic nature of the Muslim diaspora in Western Europe meant that for many immigrants, the decision to settle down in Europe was not final, and they still nurtured the idea of returning as soon as economic, social and/or political conditions would permit. The increased influx of students and political refugees to Europe provided the manpower to organize and provide leadership in the Islamist associations. Improved communication (air travel, phone and fax links, satellite television, and computer networks) now links the Muslim diaspora communities in Europe to their home countries as well as to each other. The Muslim émigré communities in Europe in general, and the Islamist associations in particular, have thus acquired a marked transnational character in their organisation and outlook.

The activism of the new Islamist associations has not been predominantly illegal, although the wide media coverage, especially in France, of Islamist involvement in crimes, terrorist activities and illegal trade in drugs and arms may have conveyed such an image. Organised illegal activities have usually been associated with a wide range of support activities for the insurgency in Algeria, as we shall see below. On some occasions, however, Islamist groups in

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[22] *Ibid.*
[23] Kepel (1997), p.154.

France have been implicated in vigilante activities in an attempt to reduce drug abuse and social problems associated with it.[24]

The Islamists constitute clearly a small minority among European Muslims. Olivier Roy has identified two real trends among European Muslims: "firstly, a vocal fundamentalist school of thought, trying to build a reconstructed community […] and secondly, the silent majority of believers, who found their way on the basis of compromises, adaptation, and makeshift theology."[25] Another scholar, Felice Dassetto, has suggested that

> The bulk of Muslims in Europe — perhaps 60 per cent — fall into the bulk of 'undeclared believer' categories of 'agnostic', 'silent indifferent' or 'culturalist Muslim', that is people who may be proud to call themselves 'Muslims' but who do not engage in much in terms of religious activity. Perhaps 20 per cent […] are 'individual pietist' by way of their religiosity […] not engaging in collective mobilising activities. The remaining 20 per cent is comprised of the formal 'ritualists', 'missionaries', 'mystics' and 'militants' who are the most active in promoting and proselytising Islam.[26]

The size of the Islamist component of the Muslim diaspora is hard to assess, although it has undoubtedly increased considerably since the late 1980s.[27] The practice of Islam among Muslims in the diaspora varies greatly. Surveys in France from the mid-1990s indicated that merely some 15% regularly observe basic Muslim rituals such as the 'five pillars' of Islam, and only slightly more than 10% of this minority group of observant Muslims consider themselves supporters of political Islamism.[28] This relatively small minority of some 50,000 Muslims in France, however, have been very active and vocal, although it is divided into different and sometimes competing networks of mosques, associations, institutions, often supported by a web of financial and economic ties to external and internal sponsors.[29] In Germany, which has a significant Muslim diaspora, there is also a sizeable Algerian émigré community.[30] In late 1995, German police sources estimated the number of FIS members to be between 30 and 50 and put the number of sympathisers at 2,000.[31] A Dutch study, analysing

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[24] For example, in March 1990, during the first month of Ramadan after the Gulf War, young people in Nanterre identifying themselves with the cause of Islam wrecked a café which had been the centre of the drugs trade in the area. It was the first 'anti-drugs action' associated with Islamism and others followed, such as the so-called 'Biscottes project' in the south of Lille. In 1991, also in Nanterre, a drug dealer was stabbed by a anti-drug vigilante squad, for which the 'New Muslim Youth' were suspected. In June 1993 the discovery of weapons alongside pro-FIS leaflets in premises belonging to an association of 'New Muslim Youth' in Nanterre also suggested that vigilante actions had not ceased. The leader of the Nanterre association publicly sympatized with the vigilantes: "We want to defend the purity and public morality against drug traffickers". Cited in Kepel 1997, p.214. See also *Ibid,* p.213-4, and note 13, p.262. Vigilante action has become one of the hallmarks of several Islamist groups, in particular the South African-based 'People Against Drugs and Gangsterism' (PADAG).
[25] Roy (2000).
[26] Cited in Vertovec & Peach (1997), pp.37-38.
[27] Kepel (1997), p.153ff and 211ff.
[28] Sfeir (1997), p.15.
[29] Sfeir (1997), p.15.
[30] One estimate puts the number of Algerian Muslims in Germany at 6,700 in 1990. Others have estimated the Algerian diaspora to be between 20-30,000. See Vertovec & Peach (1997), p.17 and police estimates cited in "Fundamentalist leader 'will not become Algerian Khomeini'," *Agence France Presse* 10 January 1995, and in *Reuters* 20 October 1995.
[31] *Reuters* 20 October 1995.

the impact of radical Islam on political attitudes of first generation Moroccan Muslims in the Netherlands, found that a relatively large segment of the group "sympathizes with the FIS" (35% for 'migrant workers' and 50% of 'teachers') while only ca 20 % (of both groups) "opposes FIS".[32] Migrant workers were clearly less outspoken in their sympathy for the Islamist opposition in Algeria than 'teachers' (selected as representatives for the educated middle class). Kemper observed that nearly half of migrant workers in his sample "do [..] not want to be involved in controversial matters."[33]

2.2   A European 'Dar al-Islam'? Islamist Perceptions of the Muslim Diaspora

According to classical Muslim teaching, the Islamic worldview is that of a binary world divided between *Dar al-Islam* ('Land of Islam') where the Islamic community has been established and Islam is practiced, and *Dar al-Harb* ('The Land of War') or *Dar al-Kufr* ('The Land of Unbelief') where Muslims have to fight to establish their community of believers. This dichotomy is not absolute, however. Classical traditions of Islamic Law also spoke of 'Land of Negotiated Peace' (*Dar al-Sulh/Dar al-'Ahd*), a situation where Muslims are not in conflict with the 'ungodly' and not openly hostile to the state and *Dar al-Aman* ('Land of Safety') where Muslims were *musta'minun*, i e protégés enjoying the protection of the state concerned. The classical dichotomy of Islam and Unbelief is admittedly anachronistic, given the new reality of a large Muslim diaspora in the Western world, but it has not been replaced by a new dogma. According to one study, there is "great confusion among many contemporary [Islamic] scholars […] concerning the normative ideas of Islam about the position of Muslims living as a minority in a non-Muslim society or state."[34]

In France, Muslim preachers and activists have in practice considered Europe as a 'Land of Negotiated Peace', a land of refuge.[35] Early Muslim preachers and activists rarely considered the possibility of a permanent Islamic community and presence in the infidel Western Europe. Islamist activists tended to focus narrowly on the recruitment of members to further the struggle for an Islamic state in their homelands, while traditional Muslim preachers and *imams*, often emissaries dispatched and paid by the home states, taught political quietism to their congregations, in order not to endanger the status of Muslim immigrant guest workers in Europe and avoid upsetting their state sponsors.

With the advent of a re-islamization of the Muslim diaspora in Western Europe, and the rise of independent Islamist associations, the perception of Europe has undergone a fundamental change.[36] From the late 1980s, a more recent generation of Muslim activists and Islamist ideologues have come to acknowledge the fact of Islam *in* and even *of* Europe. France, one of the main host countries of the Muslim diaspora in Europe, was now increasingly conceptualised as a piece of 'Land of Islam', as the leading intellectual of the Tunisian Islamist movement Rashid al-Ghannushi stated at the congress of the *Union of Islamic Organisations*

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[32] Kemper in Shadid & Van Koningsveld (1996a), p.197.
[33] Kemper in Shadid & Van Koningsveld (1996a), p.197.
[34] For an analysis of the Islamic normative discussions on loyalty to a non-Muslim government, see Shadid & Van Koningsveld (1996a), pp.84ff
[35] Kepel (1997), p.151, and 195ff.
[36] Kepel (1997), p.152.

in France (UIOF) in 1990.[37] The objective was now extended to include the re-islamization of the population of Muslim origin in France, rather than an exclusive focus on *jihad* in the home countries. The Islamist movement had for the first time recognised the permanence of the Muslim presence in France, a fact that had previously been ignored. Their interest in France and its Muslim diaspora consequently increased, and their focus shifted somewhat towards the organisation of Islamist networks and infrastructure in France. The shift towards building a virtual or non-territorial 'Islamic state' in the diaspora has raised the issue of the communal status of Muslims in Europe. This new assertiveness has been met with different responses from European states, with the British government being more compliant with diaspora demands for Muslim communal institutions and recognitions as a minority group, while France, due to the republican character of the state, has been extremely reluctant to institutionalise Islamic communalism and recognize Islamic institutions as genuine interlocutors and spokesmen for the Muslim community.

2.3   Dissidents and Insurgents in Host State - Diaspora Relations

As the assertion of Muslim and communal identity became an issue in late 1980s, a number of specific issues contributed to a markedly tenser relationship between organised political Islamism and European host states. While a comprehensive discussion of host state - diaspora relations is outside the scope of this study, we will briefly exemplify how the issue of political émigré dissidents and insurgents has impinged on host state - diaspora and host state - home state relations.

A prime example of how the presence of émigré dissidents in the European diaspora would interfere with political-economic state-state relations between host state and homeland, was the *al-Mas'ari Affair* in Britain in the mid-1990s, which threatened to unravel British-Saudi relations. The advent of the information revolution confronted the authorities of the immigrants' home countries with unprecedented challenges since the new technology offered novel opportunities for oppositional politics from out-of-country bases. It dramatically enhanced the importance of the European 'sanctuary' for political dissidents and insurgent movements.

The al-Mas'ari affair dated back to a group of Saudi dissidents who in the early 1990s had issued a list of demands to King Fahd for reforms in both internal and foreign policy, hoping to apply some pressure on the authoritarian monarchy and rally domestic support behind their demands. The Saudi government cracked down on the activists, however, and those who managed to escape imprisonment, gathered in exile where they formed the *Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights* (CDLR) in May 1993. Their most prominent spokesman Muhammad al-Mas'ari set up an office in London from which he rapidly emerged as a major political figure through networking and a skilful exploitation of available information technology. His office faxed some 800 copies per week of a newsletter to the Kingdom where it was distributed widely. An email service and Internet home page widened his audience.[38] Al-Mas'ari's activism became a serious nuisance to the Saudi government and undercut its strict

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[37] The UIOF was in 1990 the main Islamist organization in France, who claimed to speak on behalf of more than 207 local associations in 1994. Kepel (1997), pp.152, 195.
[38] Rathmell et al (1997).

censorship regime on domestic politics, a policy the Saudi monarchy has also pursued through securing Saudi ownership of major pan-Arabic newspapers and TV channels. By 1995-6, the growing influence of the al-Mas'ari group prompted the Saudi government to threaten to scale down economic-military co-operation between the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia, unless al-Mas'ari was silenced. The British government, after being unsuccessful in its attempts to deport him, proceeded to rewrite its immigration laws specifically so that future cyber-activists of al-Mas'ari's proportions can be deported.[39]

There can be little doubt that the political freedom offered in Western democracies is a key factor behind the Islamists' utilisation of Europe as a support base for political opposition and/or armed insurgencies in the Middle East.[40] A whole continuum of support activities for opposition and insurgent movements in the home countries can be identified, ranging from legal activities in support of human rights and imprisoned political dissidents to flagrantly illegal acts such as bank robberies, weapons smuggling and drug trafficking to finance insurgencies overseas. Recently passed national and international legislation reflects the growing concern over support activities for armed insurgencies overseas.[41] An unclassified report by the *Canadian Intelligence Security Service*,[42] one of the very few Western intelligence services to openly talk about the issue of immigrants and illegal support activities for insurgencies overseas, identified the following range of illegal support activities on Canadian territory[43]:

> "Many of the world's terrorist groups have a presence in Canada, where they engage in a variety of activities in support of terrorism, including logistical support for offshore terrorism through efforts to obtain weapons and equipment to be shipped abroad, such as electrical detonators for explosives, or remote-control devices that can be adapted for use in the remote detonation of bombs […]; attempts to establish an operational support base in Canada, to enable groups to send in hit teams for attacks on targets of opportunity; fundraising, advocacy, propaganda. […]; intimidation and manipulation of

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[39] Andrew Rathmell et al (1997).

[40] A web-based mouthpiece for the radical Islamists noted for example that: "The consecutive dictatorship regimes and the degrading living conditions have driven many Muslims out of their homes temporarily to places less hostile towards their religion […]. The Western countries, a primary contributor to this migration, ironically accepted most of those Muslim immigrants […]. The West […] is a place of great opportunities for Muslims to practice Da'wah and claim more adherents to the universal Deen of Allah."(*Da'wah* – 'proselytising'; *Deen of Allah* – 'God's Religion'). See Abdul Walid al-Hawami & Ibrahim Abu Khalid in "Da'wah -Getting it Right", *Nida' ul-Islam*, No. 26, April-May 1999, http://www.islam.org.au.

[41] For example, the U.S. President's Executive Order of January 1995, which orders the seizure of assets belonging to 'terrorist groups', backed up by another anti-terrorist legislation in 1996 similarly ordering the freezing of the assets of some 30 groups. Internationally, a United Nations convention has been drafted, which will require the signatory states to pass domestic legislation making it illegal to raise funds for organizations deemed 'terrorist groups'.

[42] Canadian Intelligence Security Service, *Terrorism 2000/2001*, dated 18 December 1999, cited in Emerson (2000).

[43] In a testimony dated 24 January 1998 delivered to the Special Committee of the US Senate on Security and Intelligence, Ward Elock, Director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, noted that "[w]ith perhaps the singular exception of the United States, there are more international terrorist groups active here in than in any country in the world. The Counter-Terrorism Branch is currently investigating over 50 organizational targets and 350 individual terrorist targets […] By way of example, the following terrorist groups acting on behalf have been and are active in Canada: Hezbollah and other Shiite Islamic terrorist organizations; several Sunni Islamic Extremist groups, including Hamas, with ties to Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Lebanon and Iran; the Provisional IRA; the Tamil Tigers; the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK); and all of the world's major Sikh terrorist groups." Cited in Emerson (2000).

> Canadian citizens in émigré communities to support activities for homeland issues;[…] a safe haven for terrorists; [and] use of Canada as a base to arrange and direct terrorist activities in other countries."

Illegal recruitment, fund-raising often through intimidation or criminal activities, and arms smuggling in and from Europe, Canada and the United States by Islamist activists, acting on behalf armed insurgent movements in the Muslim world have become major problems in host state-diaspora relations, especially during the 1990s. This was not only due to the increasing scale of these activities, but also because it highlighted and accentuated sensitive issues such as the very legitimacy of an armed uprising against authoritarian rule and/or oppressive foreign occupation, and the perceived Western involvement in legitimising and even supporting economically and militarily authoritarian regimes, where Muslims in general and Islamist movements in particular are victimized. It seems fair to say that a considerable segment of the Muslim diaspora has tended to sympathize with quite radical insurgent movements, employing 'terrorist tactics' and suicide attacks in their war against the homeland regime. Since both national and international legislation largely outlaw support activities to such insurgent movements, especially recruitment and arms smuggling, this inevitably puts segments of the Muslim diaspora and host state authorities at odds.

One example from Britain illustrates this dilemma and how it affects host country-diaspora relations. In January 2001, British media reports spoke of Islamic militant groups, using British universities and mosques as 'hunting places' for activists and guerrillas. One of the most prominent Islamist radicals in London, *shaykh* 'Umar Bakri Muhammad, leader of the Islamist *Al-Muhajiriun* group, told the *Daily Telegraph* that:

> "[w]e find young men in university campuses or mosques, invite them for a meal and discuss the situation for ongoing attacks being suffered by Muslims in Chechnya, Palestine and Kashmir […] We […] make them understand their duty to support the Jihad struggle verbally, financially and, if they can, physically in order to liberate their homeland."[44]

According to al-Bakri, every year between 1,800 and 2,000 such recruits go abroad for military training, either for national service in Pakistan or to private camps in South Africa, Nigeria or Afghanistan where they learn to use weapons and explosives. Several reported episodes of British youth participating in hostage taking and suicide attacks in countries like Yemen and the Indian-controlled Kashmir seem to confirm that Bakri's statements were not entirely fictitious.[45]

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[44] Cited in H S Rao, "Jehadis recruited in British universities, mosques," *The Observer of Business & Politics* 4 January 2001.

[45] In late December 2000 a 24-year old British Muslim Muhammad Bilal, who grew up in Birmingham, was identified as the suicide car-bomber who killed nine people outside army headquarters in Srinagar in Kashmir on behalf of the Islamist separatist group of *Jaysh Muhammad*. This group and the militant Pakistani *Lashkar-e-Tayaba* group are believed to have become "significant recruiters and fundraisers from among the Pakistani and Kashmiri community in Britain." See H S Rao, "Jehadis recruited in British universities, mosques," *The Observer of Business & Politics* 4 January 2001.

During the 1990s, the British government has come under increasingly tougher pressure from a host of countries, ranging from India, Turkey, Algeria, Tunisia, Israel, Egypt, France, Russia and the United States for not reigning in and controlling the extensive support activities of 'terrorist' and insurgent organisations in the UK. There was a widespread perception among some antiterrorism officials, that Britain had become "a centre for the funding and recruitment of Islamic terrorist organisations."[46] Partly in response, a new British *Anti Terrorism Act 2000* was passed, which outlawed 21 organisations, (most of which also figured on the US Department of State list over terrorist organisations), and which also allowed a freer hand in investigating and prosecuting terrorist acts related to insurgent activity overseas. The *Anti Terrorism Act 2000* made it an offence for anybody to extend material or moral support to any of these groups, either from Britain or abroad. Of 21 organisations on the list, more than half were Islamist insurgent groups.

The new British Anti-Terrorism Act prompted fierce responses among Islamist activists in Britain. Yet the public outcry came not only from the traditional Islamist organizations, but also from more broad-based and government-friendly Muslim organisations, such as the *Muslim Council of Britain* (MCB) as well as from a host of non-Muslim human rights organisations.[47] From the earliest days of the legislative process, a number of Muslim groups had lobbied against the Act, fearing it would be used against Muslim organisations only. Lord Nazir Ahmad, one of four Muslims, represented in the British Parliament, spoke strongly against the Bill when it was debated. He and the MCB protested against what they saw as a "selective application" of the Terrorism Act "by a government which had neglected its responsibility to uphold human rights".[48] If Britain and other Security Council members had enforced UN resolutions on Kashmir and Palestine, the MCB argued, then wrongs would have been righted, and groups would not have been forced to adopt armed struggle. The perception that the Anti Terrorism Act largely excluded Christian and Jewish organisations supporting illegal and/or armed activities on behalf of governments and insurgents abroad further fanned the fury of the MCB representatives.[49]

From their rise to prominence in the early 1990s, the Islamist movements in Europe have faced repeated clampdowns on their support activities on behalf of armed insurgencies overseas. The most spectacular police operation against Islamist support networks in Europe took place in May 1998, two weeks ahead of the World Championship in soccer. In what was termed the largest ever police operation undertaken in Europe against 'terrorists', hundreds of police squads in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland simultaneously raided what was believed to be safe houses and support infrastructure for the Algerian *Armed Islamic Group*

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[46] H S Rao, "Jehadis recruited in British universities, mosques," *The Observer of Business & Politics* 4 January 2001. See also *Executive Intelligence Review*, "Put Britain on the list of states sponsoring terrorism", January 21, 2000.

[47] Some examples, see Faisal Bodi, "UK targets Muslim groups with new 'anti-terrorist' legislation"*Crescent International* 16-31 March 2001; Ahmed Versi, "Chechen Foreign Minister condemns Blair's Russian visit," *The Muslim News* 31 March 2000; and Simeon Kerr, "Islamic until proven guilty: As Britain implements sweeping anti-terror legislation, Muslims feel unfairly targeted," *Cairo Times* 4 (2) 9-22 March 2000.

[48] Faisal Bodi, "UK targets Muslim groups with new 'anti-terrorist' legislation"*Crescent International* 16-31 March 2001.

[49] Cited in Faisal Bodi, "UK targets Muslim groups with new 'anti-terrorist' legislation"*Crescent International* 16-31 March 2001.

(GIA).[50] This massive raid prompted scathing criticism among Islamist sympathisers, even though the GIA at this point was probably the single most unpopular organisation among the moderate Islamist movements due its complicity in the horrifying Algerian massacres. Many Algerian Islamists in exile had largely dismissed the GIA as nothing more than a gang of criminal murderers, completely infiltrated by the Algerian intelligence services.[51] Still, faced with a massive police onslaught on an Islamist support network in Europe, Islamists retreated to the traditional defensive posture. As one article in the London-based *Muslimmedia* noted about the police operation,

> "their joint criminal action, still unfolding, is religious in nature, directed as it is against Islamic activists and also designed to bail out the corrupt and anti-Islamic junta in Algeria - a country whose vast gas and oil resources the 'Christian democrats', incidentally, have no compunction plundering".[52]

The police raids were described as "typical of totalitarian states and in clear violation of EU and United Nations conventions against racism, religious discrimination and violations of personal freedoms, including the freedoms of thought and belief."[53] The clash of civilization motive was also highlighted, pointing to the Italian police who in a bizarre display of religious insensitivity had code-named the raids in Italy 'Operation Crusade'. The Islamist press was further incensed by the fact that the police operation reportedly did not uncover any explosives. Only one firearm and large amounts of money were confiscated. This seemed to confirm their suspicion that the police had merely intended to disrupt the *support activities* of the Islamist activists in Europe, in a bid to prop up the military government in Algeria, and were not actually aiming at forestalling terrorist attacks during the upcoming World Cup in soccer.[54] The police raid, hence, was considered a skilful exploitation of the World Cup event to bully the Islamist community into submission, get rid of unwanted aliens, and send a powerful message to future Muslim immigrants of "how unwanted Muslims are in Europe."[55]

2.4   The Algerian Islamists in France in the Early 1990s

There is little doubt that the new Islamist movements that proliferated in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Europe were primarily diaspora movements. Although concerned about the struggle for an Islamic state in their home countries, they were not at all mere extensions or branches of existing Islamist movements in their home countries. The idea that the Algerian Islamist movement, represented by the umbrella movement *Islamic Salvation Front* ('Front Islamique du Salut' - FIS), founded in 1989, from the very beginning planned and implemented a grand strategy for establishing secure bases in Europe through a mobilisation of Islamist activists among the Algerian diaspora, is probable erroneous, although numerous press

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[50] M S Ahmed, "EU uses World Cup to demonise Islam," *Muslimedia:* 16-30 June 1998.
[51] See for example Izel et al (1999); "Algerian military to blame for a year of exceptional violence," *Crescent International* 16-31 January; and John Sweeney & Leonard Doyle, "Algerian Regime Responsible for Massacres: Algeria regime 'was behind Paris bombs',"*The Guardian Weekly* 16 November 1997, p.1. 2001.
[52] M S Ahmed, "EU uses World Cup to demonise Islam," *Muslimedia:* 16-30 June 1998.
[53] M S Ahmed, "EU uses World Cup to demonise Islam," *Muslimedia:* 16-30 June 1998.
[54]*The Times* of London quoted police sources as saying that the operation "was intended to dismantle suspected support networks for Algerian Islamic guerrilla groups rather than counteract any specific terrorist bombing threat." Cited in M S Ahmed, "EU uses World Cup to demonise Islam," *Muslimedia:* 16-30 June 1998.
[55] M S Ahmed, "EU uses World Cup to demonise Islam," *Muslimedia:* 16-30 June 1998.

reports and a book by former police chief Charles Pellegrine, *Le FIS en France: mythe ou réalité?* (Paris, 1992) have lent weight to the idea that the FIS has played a major role in the Islamist movement in France.[56] Writing in the mid-1990s, Gilles Kepel observed that the FIS strategy in France had undergone considerable change since the FIS' establishment in March 1989. At first the Algerian Islamists had refused to accept emigration as a permanent fact, a position that was only gradually abandoned on the insistence of the Islamist movement in France that FIS leaders should consider "the specific situation of Islam in France."[57] FIS appears to have viewed immigrants with some distrust. Initially, FIS had not even intended to open a French branch of the party, but rather an office as a prelude to an embassy, obviously thinking that Algerians would not be able to live under a non-Islamic regime in 'a reviled and sinful country'. The support network, which nevertheless materialised, only became more important after the crackdown against FIS in Algeria in June 1991 and especially after February 1992. When FIS won local elections in Algeria in 1990, they established their own organisation in France with a view to building support and collecting funds for activities in Algeria. This organisation was labelled *The Algerian Brotherhood in France* (Fraternité Algérienne en France, FAF), founded in February 1991.[58] Between February and August 1992, when the FIS was dissolved by the Algerian authorities, and its leaders rounded up, Islamist activists from the radical *salafist* faction of FIS (which was close to the GIA) also became active in France, setting up several support networks.[59]

The most noteworthy FAF activity in France was its media outlet, a weekly news bulletin mainly devoted to events in Algeria, often labelled 'news of the uprising' or 'news of the jihad'. The style of the newsletter had some similarities to the GIA communiqués (see below chapter 4.5), which became another major media outlet, at least for the radical wing of the Islamist movement. In FAF's newsletters, the Algerian military regime and its leaders were depicted as bloodthirsty isolated dictators and the *mujahidin,* the Islamist insurgents, were portrayed as freedom fighters, "in the upbeat style of a 'war news' chronicle".[60] Especially when the civil war became thoroughly brutalised in 1993, and the FAF newsletters began to justify 'armed operations' and 'executions' of civilians, intellectuals, journalists and foreigners, a chasm was created between the FIS and French intellectuals. It contributed to the first wave of frictions between the Islamist movement and the French authorities. Denouncement of French support of the Algerian regime had been rare until January 1993 when the French Foreign Minister Roland Jacques visited Algiers. However, until then France was still seen as an important land of refuge. Eventually, in 1993 all FAF news bulletins were banned because of their depiction of the Algerian civil war. Consequently, newsletters and communiqués could only be distributed covertly. The turn towards secrecy obviously favoured the radical factions of the FIS and increasingly the GIA, who had never believed in an open dialogue and a democratic negotiated settlement, but favoured the option of military struggle alone.

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[56] Kepel (1997), p.211.
[57] Kepel (1997), p.212.
[58] Kepel (1997), p.212.
[59] Two of them were Qamar al-Din Kharban and Boujemaa Bounoua, two veterans of the Afghanistan war and active organisers of the armed underground in Algeria. Both represented the radical salafist tendency within FIS and were subsequently expelled to Pakistan as part of the crackdown on Algerian Islamist support network in France.
[60] Kepel 1997, p.214.

It appears that FIS leaders in exile may have been wary that the radicalism emanating from the news bulletin would damage the Islamist cause. At the very least, the distribution of the FAF newsletter *Le Critère* was banned at the premises of the Khalid Ibn Walid mosque (in Paris) where Shaykh Sahrawi (one of FIS' founders) was the *imam*.[61] FAF's problem with the police authorities worsened in November 1993 when several dozens of its leaders and supporters were arrested. Most of them were released without charges, while some were placed under house arrest, and some of them exiled to Burkina Faso. The police operation was carried out after the capture of a French consular agent in Algiers by the GIA. The aim of the police operation seems to have been to destabilize the FIS's support network and to set strict limits to their activities. In FIS' place, however, the more radical GIA group moved in and established itself as the dominant Algerian insurgent group from 1994 onwards.

The French scholar Gilles Kepel observed in a study written before 1995 that the FAF had introduced a new dimension in the Islamist movement in France. The FAF had gained a strong foothold in various local associations of 'New Muslim Youth'. However, unlike previous Islamist movements, the FAF remained concerned first and foremost with the Algerian *jihad*, and it passed on to French-Maghrebi youth a far more radical and uncompromising ideology and worldview than the rest of the Islamist movement had embraced in the early 1990s. By its uncritical extolment of the *jihad* in Algeria, the virtuous *mujahidin* in eternal battle with Evil — represented by the Algerian regime, secularism and France — the FAF contributed to a new radicalism in the Islamist movement in France that easily exacerbated the separatist response in the Muslim community in France.[62] Undoubtedly, the FAF had paved the ground for the future mobilization of radical Islamist youth for insurgency support activities as well as armed operations on the European mainland. In this light, the rise of the GIA and its support networks in Europe must be understood. The GIA introduced a far more aggressive insurgency support strategy than the more politically oriented FIS, combining the entire spectrum of illegal support activities, with an explicit willingness to export the violent conflict to Europe.

2.5   The Origin and Development of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria

The origins and history of the *Armed Islamic Group* (or Groupe Islamique Armée, GIA) is somewhat obscure, but according to its spokesmen, it was founded in 1989 and carried out its first armed operation in 1991.[63] The group traced its origin to the so-called *Bouyali Group* (1982-1987), which was the first Islamist armed underground organisation in Algeria after independence. Bouyali advocated the idea that "armed struggle was the only way of bringing about an Islamic state."[64]

In an interview with a leading Arab journal *Al-Wasat* in early 1994, the GIA's Head of the Political and Jurisdictional Committee traced the movement's combat preparations back to

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[61] Kepel 1997, p.263, note 19.

[62] Kepel (1997), p.216.

[63] "In the first press meeting since its foundation two years ago: The Armed Islamic Group in Algeria reveals to 'al-Wasat' its plans and goals (in Arabic)," *al-Wasat* 30 January 1994.

[64] Mustafa Bouyali became the emir of the MIA despite his superficial knowledge of Islamic teaching. Between 1982 until he was ambushed and killed in 1987, Bouyali became something of a legend, dodging the police and carrying out daring operations. Kepel (1997), p.165.

1989. The end of the Afghan war where many GIA guerrillas had fought, and the release from prison of Bouyali's main comrade-in-arms al-Miliyani facilitated the formation of the movement. The GIA spokesman described the GIA's early history as follows:

> "Contacts were made between people who saw holy struggle (*jihad*) as a legal-religious duty imposed on every Muslim (*fard 'ayn*), when God's law is not implemented, when the land of Muslims have been usurped, and when the women and families of Muslims are being disgraced. Many youth joined *shaykh* al-Miliyani. They set up cells in villages and towns, and played a large part in the launching of the armed holy struggle. In addition, young holy fighters (*mujahidin*) who fought in Afghanistan, joined the group. Out of these groups, the GIA was formed, and a communiqué of unity *(bayan al-wahdah)* was issued in which it explained some main points about the group's work. After two years, on the 18 November 1991, the GIA launched its first operation.[65]

The foundation of the *Islamic Salvation Front* (FIS) in 1989, and the issue of parliamentary elections and FIS's participation in them divided the Islamist movement in Algeria. This caused some of the more militant activists, many of them former members of the Bouyali group or formed *Mujahidin* of the Afghan war, to refer to FIS party leaders as ungodly.[66] From among these opponents of the politically-oriented FIS, the militant GIA rose to the fore, who differed from the FIS on the twin issues of "non-acceptance of elections and democracy, and rejection of the idea of a national reconciliation with the current regime in Algeria."[67] The GIA also differed from the FIS by the former's willingness to target a far wider variety of targets, including civilians and foreigners, residing in Algeria. For this reason, the GIA gained a reputation as a notorious and ruthless terrorist group. Despite GIA's terrorism, the organisation nevertheless emerged as the leading insurgent organisation by mid-1994, embracing most Islamist insurgent groups in Algeria, apart from FIS' armed wing, the *Armée Islamique du Salut* (AIS).

3   INSURGENTS AND SANCTUARIES: A FRAMEWORK

Before we look more closely at the sanctuary strategies of the Algerian Islamist insurgents, we will provide a theoretical framework for the study of insurgents and sanctuaries.

Sanctuaries have been defined as "a secure base within which an insurgent group is able to organise the politico-military infrastructure needed to support its activities"[68]. This is an ideal type, and few countries are willing to allow a guerrilla state to develop in its midst. The character of sanctuary will vary, depending on the strength of the host country's state institutions, its territorial control and ideological sympathy with the rebel cause. At a

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[65] "In the first press meeting since its foundation two years ago: The Armed Islamic Group in Algeria reveals to 'al-Wasat' its plans and goals (in Arabic)," *al-Wasat* 30 January 1994.
[66] Kepel (1997), p.171.
[67] "The Armed Islamic Group in Algeria: We do not follow the FIS, we differ with it (in Arabic)" *al-Hayat* 11 November 1993
[68] Brynen (1990), Chapter 1, p.2. This section draws heavily upon the theoretical framework in chapter 1 in Brynen's book.

minimum, sanctuaries must be *relatively secure rear bases where political organisation is tolerated and military-related support activities are possible.*

The importance of sanctuaries has been stressed in literature on insurgencies. One of the most elaborate studies on the dynamic interaction between insurgent movements and the sanctuary states is Rex Brynen's study of the PLO in Lebanon. Leading guerrilla theorists-cum-practitioners, including Mao Tse-Tung and Che Guevara, have devoted considerable attention to sanctuaries in their writings.[69] The loss of sanctuaries, such as the withdrawal of Iranian support for the Iraqi Kurdish Pesh Merga guerrillas in 1975, will almost invariably have devastating effects on the insurgents. *Internal sanctuaries*, i.e. "liberated zones" in the conflict areas, are relatively rare. More often, insurgent movements depend on *external sanctuaries*, protected by international borders and sometimes by geographical distance. The compression of time and space, together with the intensification of cross-border, transnational relations – all key characteristics of globalisation – have increased the value of geographically distant external sanctuaries.[70]

The sanctuary states' relations with the insurgents vary greatly. Some are involuntary hosts, unable to eradicate the insurgent movement's use of their territory. More often, however, sanctuaries are part of a deliberate policy motivated by ideological sympathy or *Realpolitik* objectives, where the insurgents form a part of the host state's arsenal of tools of covert destabilisation of hostile states. A third form of sanctuary may emerge from the host countries' *self-imposed restrictions on political surveillance and police repression* and the permeability of international borders.

The selection of sanctuary is determined by physical availability, proximity and access to the conflict areas, as well as the degree of direct support or tacit tolerance that can be elicited from the host state. The existence of popular support within the sanctuary state, e.g. in diaspora communities sharing ethnic and religious bonds with the insurgents, is another key determinant.

Most theoretical works on sanctuaries have drawn upon case studies where the enemy state has been militarily stronger than the host country and able to impose heavy sanctions in terms of military retaliation.[71] In our case study, however, the host states (Europe) are not militarily threatened and the enemy regime's (Algeria) ability to impose political sanctions on the host states has been minimal. Hence, the host countries' relations to the insurgent group are determined not by vulnerability to retaliation, but rather by a number of more general foreign and domestic policy issues such as concerns about the outcome of the Algerian civil war and political stability in the wider Northern African region, domestic minority politics, and more general human rights concerns. The civil liberties and rule of law in a full-fledged European democracy impose significant restrictions with regard to the host country's ability to eradicate the insurgent group's presence.

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[69] Mao, for example, considered the establishment of secure base areas to be one of seven 'fundamental steps' in a successful guerrilla campaign. See Mao Tse-Tung (1961), p. 107.

[70] For a discussion of the impact of globalisation on insurgent and terrorist groups, see Lia & Hansen (2000). For a popularised 'expert' discussion on the web, see Dartnell (1999).

[71] For Israel – PLO/Lebanon, see Brynen (1990); for South Africa/Rhodesia – South African Liberation Movement/Zambia, see Anglin & Show (1979).

Insurgent strategies towards the host states need to be responsive to the latter's real and potential costs of maintaining the sanctuary. Insurgents must thus balance between utilising the sanctuary for the benefit of the insurgency and reducing friction with the host states to a manageable level. Several strategies are possible:

- A **policy of restraint** aims at reducing friction beyond the level where containment and suppression would otherwise occur. For example, the low profile of the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) in Tunisia during the Algerian revolution (1954-62) represented precisely such a strategy.
- An **internal alliance** with groups in the host country, such as influential parties, local associations, interest groups, human rights organisations and ethnic and religious minorities, can assist the insurgents in exerting political pressure to enlist greater tacit support or at least tolerance on the part of the host state.
- A strategy of **coercion/deterrence** is probably only useful as a strategy when the enemy state does not have the option of military retaliation or effective political sanctions. In such cases, the insurgent group may be able to negotiate an informal understanding with the host country, implying that the latter will not interfere in its activities as a *quid pro quo* for not staging armed operations in the host state.
- **Communication** is a key strategy in the insurgents' effort to eliminate misunderstandings with regard to its intentions, and defuse crisis with the host-state. In combination with a strategy of coercion, communication is vital to obtain a calibrated use of violence.
- **Abandonment or transfer** of sanctuary becomes as an attractive option when the utility of the sanctuary declines, due to host state repression, and when other sanctuaries are available.

Costs of maintaining sanctuaries will almost inevitably increase over time. Political pressure and sanctions from other states, and criminal activity on the part of the insurgent groups (such as coercion and robbery to raise funds, smuggling of arms, recruitment of guerrillas) will gradually increase frictions with the host-state. Increased friction in insurgent-sanctuary state relations will consequently decrease the utility of the sanctuary and force the insurgents to reconsider its sanctuary strategy.

The character of the insurgent group also affects insurgent-sanctuary state relations. Revolutionary insurgents usually face greater difficulties in securing and maintaining host country support, than do for example separatist insurgents. The threat of contagion is usually a factor that seriously affects insurgent-host country relations. In the case of Islamist insurgents, the potential radicalisation of European Muslim diaspora communities is obviously a factor considered by the host countries, when determining their level of tolerance towards support networks for Islamist insurgencies in the Middle East.

4   THE GIA'S INSURGENCY-SUPPORT ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE

We have indicated that the Islamist movement primarily has regarded Europe as a 'Land of Islam' or 'Land of Negotiated Peace'. Both would also be a 'sanctuary' which offers the opportunity to create support networks for insurgencies taking place in their home countries. The remaining part of this report is a case study of the Algerian *Armed Islamic Group* (GIA), not only because of its extensive support activities in Europe, but also because the GIA, as opposed to many other overseas Islamist insurgent movements, decided to launch a series of armed attacks in Europe, first and foremost in France, a tactic which appears to contradict the primary goal of utilising Europe as a support base.

The political-military strategy of the GIA has not been analysed in the academic literature as far as we can ascertain.[72] It appears that the GIA at an early stage was preoccupied with the strengthening of its support networks. In early 1994, the GIA presented the following outline of its current and future strategy, encompassing both overall challenges and immediate practical problems:

The Strategy Plan of the GIA Command Council in January 1994

1. "to lay down a comprehensive national strategy for the military field operations.
2. lay down a precise information strategy to break the barrier of the internal and external media black-out.
3. provide a more effective framework for the masses.
4. discipline the arms smuggling networks and find new networks for the GIA.
5. find networks for fundraising and its use.
6. make a register of the number of martyrs, fighters, and prisoners, in order to be able to care for their families and cover their needs.
7. break the siege that has been imposed on the Medea province by extending the circle of the operations in order to incorporate all parts of the country.
8. monitor and kill activist traitors, hypocrites and spies.
9. discipline the group [i e GIA] to keep its conduct within the juridical boundaries (*al-hudud al-shar'iyyah*), and spread juridical knowlegde (*al-'ilm al-shar'i*) among the fighters."[73]

Source: "The Armed Islamic Group in Algeria reveals to 'al-Wasat' its plans and goals (in Arabic)," al-Wasat 30 January 1994.

It is interesting to note the importance that the GIA apparently attributed to insurgency support such as an information strategy to break the media black-out, the control of arms smuggling routes, and fund raising efforts. A close examination of available information on GIA-operations and activities in Europe in the 1990s reveals a relatively persistent pattern in which insurgency-support activities – not armed operations – dominate in nearly all countries. These support activities primarily include gunrunning, fund-raising, provision of shelter for wanted activists, recruitment of fighters, and to a lesser extent public relation efforts to support the insurgency campaign in Algeria.

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[72] One exception is Izel et al (1999) who argues that the GIA was a counter guerrilla force, a vehicle for the Algerian military regime to crush the 'real' Islamist insurgent movement.

[73] Cited in "In the first press meeting since its foundation two years ago: The Armed Islamic Group in Algeria reveals to 'al-Wasat' its plans and goals (in Arabic)," *al-Wasat* 30 January 1994.

4.1   Fundraising

Fundraising is a key objective in insurgencies. Funds to sustain arms supplies to the rebels may in fact be less vital than funds to secure the loyalty of fighters and civilian community support for the insurgency. Islamist insurgent movements in the Middle East are known for their conscious policy of maintaining popular support through extensive community services.[74] Raising funds in the external sanctuary stands out as a vital component of insurgent strategy in host countries. The legal channels for doing so may be of limited value for an insurgent group, even if the group is allowed to openly run legal business. Insurgents can seldom afford to postpone its armed struggle until legal economic activities in the diaspora yield surplus. Hence, the incentives to turn to illegal fund-raising and crime are great. Funds from external sponsors are seldom available in sufficient amounts.

During the 1990s funds to the GIA's insurgency campaign in Algeria were raised in a number of ways. There is little reliable information on **external sponsorship** for the GIA, but the group probably received logistical and some financial support from the Saudi dissident Usama bin Laden's group. US intelligence and law enforcement officials speaking on conditions of anonymity, told NBC News in October 2000 that bin Laden came in contact with the Algerian GIA when he was financing the recruiting and organization of the so-called 'Afghan-Arabs', and Algerians from the GIA group were among the first students at bin Laden's training camps in Sudan, beginning in January 1994. British intelligence also tracked "wire transfers from bin Laden's then-headquarter in Khartoum […] to a London cell of the GIA."[75] The Algerian military regime has also accused Iran and Sudan of supporting the GIA, while GIA commanders have rejected these claims.[76] The Arabic press has also indicated that wealthy private sponsors from Kuwait have supported the Algerian Islamist insurgents financially.[77] Iranian support for revolutionary organisations abroad have been focused on shi'itte groups, in particular the Lebanese *Hizballah*, and the Algerian GIA has rarely been mentioned among the radical Islamist groups that regularly used to met with the Iranian intelligence agency in Tehran.[78]

It appears that external support and sponsorship were inadequate to sustain the GIA insurgency campaign during the 1990s. Probably for this reason, the GIA devoted considerable efforts to

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[74] The *Hizb Allah* movement in Lebanon, and the political wing of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement *Hamas* were known for pursuing such a strategy during the 1990s.

[75] Robert Windrem, "Bin Laden's name raised again," *NBC News* 18 October 2000, http://www.msnbc.com/news/477832.asp?cp1=1.

[76] Representatives of the Algerian military regime have claimed that the GIA is sponsored by "the monarchies of the Gulf", and that its emergence is connected to the radical Islamist schools of Hasan al-Turabi, the Saudi dissident Usama Bin Ladin, the Egyptian Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahman, and Shaykh al-Ghazali. The pro-regime press has also accused the Iranian intelligence of "organizing the GIA", and Sudan of "arming the GIA". See Izel et al (1999), p.376), and "In the first press meeting since its foundation two years ago: The Armed Islamic Group in Algeria reveals to 'al-Wasat' its plans and goals (in Arabic)," *al-Wasat* 30 January 1994.

[77] See "France: London is an active commando centre for terrorists (in Arabic)," *Al-Watan al-'Arabi* 20 December 1996.

[78] See for example the short survey of meetings in 1997 provided by Hilliary Mann, "Iranian links to international terrorism - the Khatemi era," *PolicyWatch* No 296 (28 January 1998), http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/watch/Policywatch/policywatch1998/296.htm

fundraising efforts in Europe. One possible avenue for fundraising was the numerous **mosques** throughout Europe where money for **charity** were collected. A small portion of these funds was apparently channelled to the GIA and other radical Islamist groups. Most Muslim congregations may well have been unaware of this, and donations should not be interpreted as an indication of widespread support in the Muslim diaspora for the GIA.[79] The GIA has also demanded **'war taxes'** from business people and ordinary workers.[80] Some have contributed voluntarily, while others have been coerced. For example, in the mid-1990s, several shop owners in immigrant suburbs of France brought charges against GIA-activists for subjecting them to a strong 'moral pressure' by implying that they would lose clients and get in 'trouble' if they refused to pay.[81] In addition, illegal immigrants have been blackmailed into giving away considerable portions of their wages;[82] and people with relatives and/or property in Algeria have been told to pay for their 'protection'.[83]

The GIA has also provided money from **black market** activities by receiving percentages from sale of pirated and black market products throughout Europe,[84] and probably also from smuggling of consumer goods from Europe to Algeria.[85] Moreover, the group has been involved in more serious criminal activities, such as dealing in **drugs**, **arms** and **forged documents** with a view to raise funds.[86] When the FIS still dominated the scene in the early 1990s, serious charges were levelled against their supporters in France, for example that the FIS "finances itself by drug money".[87] Reports indicated that some Islamist activists attempted to take over the lucrative drug trade in some areas by setting up their own "Islamist anti-drug vigilante squads" ostensibly to combat drug dealing, but in reality to eliminate competitors.[88] There are strong indications that the GIA activists in France have been dealing in stolen cars.[89] Finally, some GIA-activists have committed **armed robberies** and **thefts.**[90] For instance, Khaled Kelkal, who was probably one of the ringleaders of the GIA-bombing campaign in

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[79] Pujadas & Salam (1995), p. 100*;* Vogt (1995), 97; and interviews with police intelligence officers, September 2000. Names withheld on request.

[80] Vogt (1995), p. 97.

[81] Pujadas & Salam (1995), p. 100; and "Global Terrorism Decoded. The Arab Afghans. A discussion with Stan Bedlington" at http://www.globalterrorism.com/secure/interviews/bed2.html Stan Bedlington was a senior analyst in the CIA's counter-terrorism Center until 1994.

[82] See for instance David Leppard, "Algerians in London Fund Islamic Terrorism"*, Sunday Times* 1 January 1995.

[83] See for instance Vogt (1995), p. 97.

[84] See for example "Islamic group had Israeli Targets," *Reuters* 10 November 1994.

[85] See for instance Hervé Gattegno & Nathaniel Herzberg, "Une opération de police a été lancée contre deux réseaux islamistes en France," *Le Monde* 21 June 1995; and Pujadas & Salam (1995), p. 168.

[86] See for instance Gattegno & Inciyan, "Les filières francaises de la 'guerre sainte'," *Le Monde* 11 November 1995; "L'itinéraire de Khaled Kelkal éclaire le procès de attentats islamistes," *Le Monde* 9 June 1999; "France issues bombing suspect photos, sets reward," *Reuter*s 9 September 1995; Pujadas & Salam (1995), p. 171; "French police swoop on Islamists, arms dealers," *Reuters* 27 September 1995; and Erich Inciyan, "Un réseaux de soutien aux islamistes algériens a été démantelé en région parisienne," *Le Monde* 11 May 1996.

[87] Kepel (1997), p.214; and Pujadas & Salam (1995), p.96.

[88] Kepel (1997), p.214; and Pujadas & Salam (1995), p.96.

[89] "Police Arrest 35 in Antiterrorist Raids", *AFP* 10 May 1996 via FBIS (FBIS-TOT-96-016-L); Pujadas & Salam (1995), pp. 168-69.

[90] For instance Marie-Claude Decamps, "L'Espagne démantèle un réseau du GIA algérien," *Le Monde* 12 April 1997. Another example is Ahmad Risam, who planned attacks in the US, but was arrested on the Canadian-US border in mid-December 1999. After he entered Canada as an illegal immigrant in 1994 he became part of small Algerian émigré group involved in thefts and forgeries in Canada. See "Canada Warns of Terror Crime Ring," *BBC* 20 December 1999, and Laura Mansnerus & Judith Miller, "Terrorist Details his Training in Afghanistan," *The New York Times* 4 July 2001.

France in 1995, seems to have plundered shops, dealt with hashish and stolen cars in order to finance the purchase of weapons for Algerian guerrillas.[91]

In early 1996 an armed gang operated in the Roubaix area on the Franco-Belgian border, where it committed a series of armed robberies of bullion vans and convenience stores. The gang which by all accounts must have been a GIA cell, was not exclusively Algerian but included also Moroccans and a French convert. The guerrilla-style operational patterns of the cell inspired local newspapers to write alarmist articles about this new phenomenon of 'gangsterrorism'. Wearing hoods over military fatigue and armed with grenade launchers and Kalashnikov assault rifles, the group would stop a van with a grenade and then "pepper it with sustained automatic fire with no attempt to spare bystanders", according to one press account.[92] An Islamist preacher, who had toured the Roubaix area at the time, had reportedly bestowed the necessary Islamic legitimacy on such heavy-handed fund-raising methods. He had sanctioned armed robberies and crime as justifiable emergency means when it was part of the 'holy struggle'.[93]

Undoubtedly, the involvement in such flagrantly criminal activities in the diaspora invites police repression, and inevitably increases frictions with the sanctuary states. In turn, this threatens the very utility of the sanctuary for the insurgents, and forces a reconsideration of the insurgent sanctuary strategy.

4.2 Gunrunning

Needless to say, smuggling of arms, ammunitions and other materials necessary for guerrilla warfare will be a key priority to insurgents in their sanctuary strategy. The GIA has devoted considerable resources to gunrunning, although fundraising for the purchase of arms in areas closer to or in Algeria proper appears to have been a higher priority issue.[94] The so-called grey market in Europe "where, after the fall of the Soviet Empire, almost any type of weapon is available," was a source of arms.[95] Let us look at some examples.

In 1994, Abdelhakim Boutrif was arrested on a motorway east of Paris. A search of his car uncovered large quantities of explosives and detonators, as well as heavy weapons, ammunition and radio transmitters. He was charged with smuggling arms to Muslim rebels in Algeria.[96] In 1995 an Algerian was arrested at a railway station in Barcelona while carrying a suitcase full of weapons and forged French identity papers. He was heading for Algeria.[97] In 1992, the French convert Didier Guyon was arrested in Algeria, together with four other

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[91] See for instance "La deuxième vie de Khaled Kelkal," *Le Monde* 17 January 1996.
[92] See Julian Nundy, "Shoot-out as the Holy War turns to crime," *Sunday Telegraph* 31 March 1996, p.26. See also "Islamic link confirmed in ganster case – magistrate," *Reuters* 2 April 1996.
[93] According to Phillipe Aziz, sociologist and author of *Le Paradoxe de Roubaix*, interviewed in Julian Nundy, "Shoot-out as the Holy War turns to crime," *Sunday Telegraph* 31 March 1996, p.26.
[94] Inter alia David Leppard, "Algerians in London Fund Islamic Terrorism," *Sunday Times* 1 January 1995.
[95] "Global Terrorism Decoded. The Arab Afghans. A discussion with Stan Bedlington" at http://www.globalterrorism.com/secure/interviews/bed2.html Stan Bedlington was until 1994 a senior analyst in the CIA's Counter-terrorism Center.
[96] "Suspected Algerian rebels go on trial in France," *Reuters* 21 January 1998.
[97] "Heavily armed Algerian arrested in Spain," *Reuters* 14 March 1995.

residents of the French town of Sartrouville. They had left France ten days before. Their car was full of arms and explosives destined for the Algerian insurgents.[98]

It appears that the GIA usually acquired weapons in Belgium, Germany or Slovakia, and smuggled them to Algeria via France and Spain.[99] There were alternative smuggling routes, for example through Italy, or from Slovakia via Switzerland and Germany. The GIA has also purchased arms in other European countries.[100] In addition to weapons, the GIA's support-network in Europe has provided Algerian guerrillas with other war-related materials such as radios, navigation equipment, chemicals, medicaments, and clothes.[101]

4.3   Recruitment and Training

Many insurgent movements have attributed great importance to the recruitment of guerrillas from among the diaspora population. Recruitment not only serves to replace arrested or killed warriors, but also embodies the popular support and the political legitimacy of the insurgency itself.

The GIA's recruitment in Europe has been conducted in a number of ways. Some members of the diaspora community have been forced into assisting the GIA with money, shelter, transportation and mailboxes, as the GIA threatened to kill family members in Algeria if they refused.[102] Nevertheless, the majority were obviously recruited on an ideological basis. Interestingly, a number of key GIA activists in Europe were former petty criminals whose knowledge of Islam was little more than rudimentary, but they have turned to the GIA cause with a zeal characteristic of recent converts or born-again believers.[103]

The numerous Islamic **youth clubs** often situated in disadvantaged urban areas, have been a venue for recruiting sympathisers and future insurgents. Islamists have established social welfare associations in many poor suburbs of France. Their offers have spanned from homework aid, via leisure activities and organised trips, to courses in Arabic and Islam. In addition, they have established several sport clubs. The purpose of the Islamic clubs is to promote adherence to Islam and to fight social problems, such as juvenile crime and drug abuse. It is important to note that the vast majority of these clubs do not support radical Islamism. The clubs nevertheless represent an important arena for radical Islamism, as the

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[98] AIS, the armed wing of the Islamic Salvation Front. (The GIA appeared on the scene only in late 1992 and early 1993). Bernard Philippe, "Didier Guyon, moujahedin de la banlieue nord-ouest", *Le Monde* 18 November 1992.
[99] For instance Pujadas & Salam (1995), p. 171; and Durán (2000), p.15.
[100] Pujadas & Salam (1995), p. 171; George Brock, "Network of terror began in Afghanistan", *The Times* 18 October 1995; "Algerians on terror charges," *BBC* 26 October 1998; and "Swiss ban guns for Algerians to stop rebel arming," *Reuters* 3 March 1997.
[101] "Algerians on terror charges," *BBC* 26 October 1998; and Acacio Pereira, "Le procès du 'réseau Chalabi' s'ouvre dans la discorde et les controversies," *Le Monde* 1 September 1998.
[102] Pujadas & Salam (1995), p. 79.
[103] For instance, the three key GIA operatives in Europe, Khaled Kelkal, Didier Guyon and Mohammed Chalabi, were all former convicts, and also recent 'born-again' Muslims or convert. See Pujadas & Salam (1995), pp. 88-97 & 123; Scott Kraft, "French police report foiling bomb plot," *Los Angeles Times* 3 November 1995; and "Algerian gunman's girlfriend charged in France," *Reuters* 8 December 1995.

separation between radical and more moderate Islamist groups in the diaspora is not as clear-cut as it is in the home states.[104]

Prisons constitute another important arena for recruitment**.** The moderate and almost a-political Islamic *Jam'iyyat al-Tabligh* movement runs a visitors' service in many prisons, and has converted a great number of inmates. The organisation has no deliberate intention to trigger violent actions. Yet for several GIA-activists, their recruitment to the GIA has come through more moderate Islamic movements, which obviously did not offer sufficient outlet for the zeal of the newly converted. For instance, the GIA operative Khaled Kelkal was 're-islamised' during a term of imprisonment, most probably by Tabligh.[105] In addition, the GIA has actively recruited from among the prison population themselves. This recruitment gained momentum in 1994, when French police intensified their operations against GIA-networks, and many GIA-activists were incarcerated.[106]

Recruitment efforts may have been facilitated by the GIA's active use of the **Internet.** In general, there are numerous web-sites presenting the ideological worldviews, political activities and even details of the insurgent warfare of radical Islamists, including their version of events in countries such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Iraq, etc.[107] These presentations are usually elaborated in a multitude of books and videos, which are offered for sale. The web sites urge Muslims throughout the world to donate money for the cause and frequently contain detailed information on how to do this. The www.azzam.com web site also used to include instructions on how to train for holy war, contribute to the gunrunning and join the guerrillas "in the land of *jihad*". As for the GIA, an 'independent' group in the USA, termed the *Islamic Group of America*, presented a GIA communiqué on the Internet, claiming responsibility for the 1995 bombing campaign in France.[108] Some GIA communiqués contained calls for enlisting to join the struggle or donate material and aid to the struggle.[109] It is also known that GIA activists in Europe used to post their news bulletins, *Al-Ansar*, and later *Al-Qital* (usually news from the military front) and *al-Jama'a* on the Internet. English translations of the GIA Communiqués were also offered. The group also set up a web site in Australia. None of these sites are currently active, as far as we can ascertain, but they have probably been replaced.[110]

Mosques were evidently also used for recruitment. It is known that Algerian Islamist groups have sent their own recruitment agents to target Muslim congregations in particular.[111] The GIA's news bulletin *Al-Ansar*, which used to be produced in London, was previously

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[104] Bernard Phillippe, "Des banlieues sous influence," *Le Monde* 17 November 1992; and Pujadas & Salam (1995), p. 73.
[105] Pujadas & Salam (1995), pp. 73-76.
[106] *Ibid*, pp. 75-76.
[107] See for instance www.azzam.com and www.qoqaz.co.za. For an analysis on Islamist organisations on the web, see Whine (1998) and Zanini (1999).
[108] The group claimed that it was not affiliated to the GIA, but that it had contacts which kept them informed. John Follain, "Internet hosts Algerian extremist propaganda", *Reuters* November 2 1995.
[109] See for example GIA Communique "Announcement to the Scholars", signed "Second Deputy of the Amir of the GIA, Abu Thabit 'Ali al-Afghani," dated November 1994.
[110] These websites could be found at http://www.al-ansar.org/ and http://hardy.ocs.mq.edu.au/~gia/. See http://msanews.mynet.net/MSANEWS/199711/19971106.10.htm.
[111] Interview with police intelligence officers. September 2000. Names withheld on request.

distributed outside mosques throughout Europe after Friday prayers.[112] (Apparently because of the strict surveillance in France and Belgium, the *Al-Ansar* news bulletins seem to have been produced in Britain and Sweden and then faxed to the continent.[113]) Finally, GIA-cassettes and videos have been in wide circulation, and these represented an important part of the recruitment strategy.[114]

Less is known about military training of the GIA activists in Europe. It appears that some basic **training** has been provided for prospective recruits in Europe, although more often GIA-activists recruited in Europe have been sent to Afghanistan to undergo military training programmes in Islamist camps there.[115]

French Muslims Recruited to a Moroccan Islamist Group.

One account of how French Muslim youth were recruited to a North African Islamist insurgent group is offered in the book *David Pujadas & Ahmed Salam, La tentation du Jihad. L'islam radical en France.*[116] It traces the process back to 1989 to a mosque in Orléans, where a group of youngsters was introduced to a man called 'Sa'id'. He was somewhat older than they were, and he impressed them by his manner of speaking. He gradually became their friend and started seeing them on a regular basis. They arranged meetings where he would talk about the 'evil' of Western and secular Arab regimes. Group discipline emerged. Those who were not considered eager enough were reprimanded, but there were also rewards. For instance, Sa'id took his friends on several trips to London. After a while, he encouraged them to join a shooting club. They started with inoffensive air guns. Sa'id would also arrange 'holiday camps', where they exercised shooting, hiking, gymnastics, mountain climbing and martial arts. Gradually, lessons in the doctrine of *jihad* were introduced.

In 1993 Sa'id left some weapons with two of his disciples. He told them that the police was after him and that he needed to hide them. Later, he asked his new disciples to deliver the weapons to some friends in Morocco. This journey was the first of many. The youngsters of the group would hide weapons in their cars and smuggle them to North Africa, effectively making them gunrunners. During one such journey, Sa'id asked two of the youngsters to commit an armed robbery in Casablanca. They refused and were consequently shut out from the group. However, others accepted and were allowed to stay. Sa'id would thus filter those who were not sufficiently committed, and the process approached its end in 1994.

At a camp, Sa'id told the group that they were about to prepare an armed attack in Morocco. Many backed out, but some stayed and were later to participate in a series of armed attacks in Morocco in August 1994. Several of the youngsters were later given death sentences by Moroccan courts, while others were imprisoned in France. The attacks were carried out in co-operation with three similar groups, all consisting of young French Muslims. Some had received military training in Islamist camps in Afghanistan, while a few had fought in the civil war in Bosnia and Algeria.[117] They had also committed several hold-ups in France.[118] The four groups belonged to a Moroccan Islamist organisation, but co-operated with the GIA, and it seems likely that both recruit in similar ways.[119]

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[112] Jason Benneto, "Islamic exiles 'flocking to safe haven in London'," *Independent* 4 November 1995; and " 'Al Ansar', l'hebdomadaire du vendredi," *Le Monde* 23 August 1995.

[113] "Islamic link confirmed in ganster case – magistrate," *Reuters* 2 April 1996.

[114] See for instance Pujadas & Salam (1995), pp. 175-199; "Islamic terror killing videos sold in Britain," *Sunday Times* 26 December 1995, and Julian Nundy, "Algerian Islamic Terrorists Threaten France," *Scotsman* 26 December 1996.

[115] Pujadas & Salam (1995), pp. 127-141; interviews with police intelligence officers. Names withheld on request. See also "Algerian jailed in France over guerrilla training," *Reuters* 4 March 1996.

[116] Pujadas & Salam (1995), pp.107-126.

[117] "Moslem admits 1994 Morocco attacks at Paris trial," *Reuters* 11 December 1995; and Pujadas & Salam (1995), pp. 136-137.

[118] "Paris trial Monday for Moslem fundamentalists," *Reuters* 8 December 1996.

[119] Thierry Leveque, "Moslem fundamentalists on trial after Paris blast"; and Pujadas & Salam (1995), p.120.

4.4 Providing Shelter

GIA guerrillas on the run from Algerian authorities have used Europe as a shelter area.[120] Activists in the diaspora have been in charge of providing **identification papers, housing and transportation.**[121] During numerous raids against GIA-networks, police have discovered false identity papers, residence permits and passports.[122] French authorities have complained about an increasing tendency for young men of North African origin to "lose" their identity papers.[123] Moreover, there are indications that some GIA-activists have obtained residency in Europe through arranged marriages with women from the diaspora community.[124]

The Chalabi Network in France

The so-called 'Chalabi-network' in France was uncovered in 1994, and provides an illustrative example of GIA's activities in Europe.[125] The network consisted of three branches, led by Mohamed Chalabi, Mourad Tacine and Mohamed Kerrouche respectively. The latter was probably the leader.[126]

The Chalabi-branch was in charge of recruitment, but it also smuggled arms and other equipment to Algeria.[127] It had set up a youth club, which offered children homework aid, leisure activities, holiday trips to ski resorts, etc. It also offered financial aid to disadvantaged families. The finances came from legal business, but also from sale of forged documents, heroine and arms. Mohamed Chalabi was an experienced criminal, who had been re-converted to Islam during imprisonment. He had been convicted of drug dealing, robbery and violence.

Mourad Tacine's branch was in charge of forging documents and sheltering activists on the run.[128] Mohamed Kerrouche's branch was engaged in fundraising and collected money from people in mosques. It also smuggled arms, possibly under the cover of a legal export firm. Mohamed Kerrouche was in charge of the network's international contacts, which expanded to Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, possibly also Italy and Canada, and of course Algeria.[129]

4.5 Public Relations and Propaganda

Public relations are extremely important for all insurgent movements, not only as part of their efforts to obtain international recognition for their claim to power, but perhaps more

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[120] See for example "Police Arrest 35 in Antiterrorist Raids," *AFP* 10 May 1996 via *FBIS* (FBIS-TOT-96-016-L); "Police arrest 22 in anti-terrorism swoop in Italy," *Reuters* 7 November 1996; Mark John, "German police hold Algerian in Moslem rebel probe," *Reuters* 10 September 1997; and "GIA chief Zouabri's brother seeks asylum in Britain," *BBC Monitoring Summary of World Broadcasts* 24 February 1999.
[121] Pujadas & Salam (1995), p. 134.
[122] "Belgium, Base Camp for Islamic Terrorists," *La Libre Belgique* 2 March 1995, via FBIS (FBIS-WEU-95-042); "Spain police break up Armed Islamic Group network," *Reuters* 9 April 1997; and Acacio Pereira, "Trois réseaux de soutien aux islamistes algériens," *Le Monde* 1 September 1998.
[123] John Follain, "Terrorism experts fear new violence in France," *Reuters* 4 August 1996.
[124] Pujadas & Salam (1995), p.79.
[125] 138 persons associated with the networks were charged by French prosecution authorities. They spent an average of 14 months in custody. However, only 24 persons were convicted, and out of these, four have been acquitted by appeal. See Jon Henley, "Lawyers attack French 'show trials of Islamists'," *Guardian* 22 January 1999; and "La cour d'appel de Paris a relaxé quatre membres du 'réseau Chalabi'," *Le Monde* 31 March 2000.
[126] Kerrouche's 'war name' was *Salim*, thus the groups are also known as *the Salim-network*.
[127] Pujadas & Salam (1995), pp. 156-166.
[128] Acacio Pereira, "Trois réseaux de soutien aux islamistes algériens", *Le Monde* 1 September 1998.
[129] Alister Doyle, "France cracks down on Algerian Islamic militants", *Reuters* 8 November 1994.

importantly to justify the use of violence in the civil war. The GIA form no exception to this rule, despite the frequent assertion that radical Islamists do not care about international opinion.[130] According to one of the founders of the FIS 'Abd al-Baqi Sahrawi, "the Mudjahideen must […] expose the junta and its injustice inflicted upon people in newspaper, colloquia and international forums."[131]

The GIA communiqués, which were widely distributed in Europe and the USA inter alia by sending them to news agencies,[132] explained in great length their armed operations in Algeria, justifying their use of violence.[133] These communiqués and newsletters were not only intended for the Muslim Algerian diaspora community in the West, but also for Western public opinion. Several communiqués were styled as open letters, addressing "all Muslims world-wide" and "the Western conscience". The GIA was obviously very unhappy about the way Western media presented them. Several communiqués aimed at "enlighten […] the Muslim public opinion and immuniz[ing] it against falling victim to the oppressive regime's local media publicity [sic] and its extension in world media."[134] In excruciating detail the communiqués justify GIA's use of violence; it was not "launching blind terror" as portrayed in the Western media. Only collaborators and aides to the regime were executed, and "even then, punishment does [only] come after repeated warnings."[135] Through its numerous communiqués the GIA wanted to "expose the world silence to the horrible crimes perpetrated by all institutions of this regime".[136]

The secrecy of the GIA and its extreme ideology made it difficult to wage an effective media campaign in exile. Due to its differences with the FIS, the GIA representatives in exile at some point "refuse[d] to acknowledge the presence of the FIS leadership in exile".[137] Probably for security reasons, the GIA activists in the diaspora also declined to appear publicly, and confined themselves to speaking only within the framework student conferences in Europe and the US, or at special Islamic gatherings.[138] Some GIA leaders were also sceptical of the value

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[130] See for example the discussion on the 'new' religious terrorism in Hoffman (1998) and (2001).

[131] "Algeria Enters a New Djihad: Interview with with Shaikh Abdel Baki Sahraoui," *al-Munkidh* July 1993, http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/algeria.htm#Essays

[132] See for example, AFP, 15 January 1995.

[133] See for example *GIA Communique* "Announcement : Call for Scholars, Jihad News", November 1994, signed Second Deputy of the Amir of the GIA Abu Thabit Ali al-Afghani; *GIA Communique* 11 January 1995, signed Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Amin, Amir of the Mujahidin in Muslim Algeria; *GIA Communique* 9 February 1995, signed Amir of the "Signatories in Blood" Battalion Ibrahim Abu 'Ubaydah (very detailed on the armed operations inside Algeria); *GIA Communique* No. 43 18 April 1996 and No 44 21 May 1996(on the kidnapping and subsequent execution of the French Monks), both signed Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Amin, Amir of the Mujahidin in Muslim Algeria; *GIA Communique* "On the Battle Operations of the Soldiers of Umar Ibn al-Khattab," dated 28 May 1996; *Al-Qital Newsletter* No 32 (April-May 1996); *Al-Qital Newsletter* No.33/34, dated 6 and 20 May 1996; and *Al-Qital Newsletter* No.35 (June-July 1996).

[134] *GIA Communique* 11 January 1995, signed Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Amin, Amir of the Mujahidin in Muslim Algeria

[135] *Ibid*

[136] GIA Communiqués were evidently very preoccupied with this issue: "We want to convict in this call the silence of 'Democracy' preachers and worshippers, and those who advocate Human Rights and others who sing the songs of intolerance [sic!] and people's freedom, we convict their silence for the crimes of the regime, and convict their un-conditional support for the regime in oppressing and killing civilians, and their denial of the Muslim people to live freely under Islam."*Ibid*

[137] "The Army 'Orders' the Boycotters to Attend and the FIS Confronts the Defiance of the GIA(in Arabic)," *Al-Wasat* 30 January 1994.

[138] "The Army 'Orders' the Boycotters to attend and the FIS Confronts the Defiance of the GIA (in Arabic)," *Al-Wasat* 30 January 1994.

of media coverage.[139] Needless to say, due the cruel atrocities attributed to the GIA in Algeria, the group's public relation efforts in Europe were wholly inadequate to sway Western opinion to its side.

4.6   Frictions with Sanctuary State

The survey of GIA's activities in Europe that we have provided above suggests a fairly consistent policy of maximising the benefits of GIA's relative freedom of action in Europe and the existence of a potentially supportive diaspora community, in order to further the insurgency in Algeria. The heavy emphasis on insurgency-support activities, including fundraising, recruitment, shelter, arms smuggling, and some public relations efforts, is significant. Yet the mere involvement in these activities raises the costs of maintaining the sanctuary, especially the involvement in illegal activities, such as drug dealing and armed robberies. As a result, frictions with the host states increase over time. Turning to coercion/deterrence through the use of violence is very costly, however, and must be applied extremely selectively. As long as sanctions applied against these activities target individual crimes rather than the entire GIA network, the incentives to change insurgent strategies vis-à-vis the host countries remained low. The rising costs can be partly offset by exercising more restraint, such as turning towards less sensitive support activities. This appears to be have been GIA's strategy for most European countries apart from France and Belgium as we shall see below.

5   EXPLAINING THE SHIFT TO VIOLENCE

The GIA has undertaken a number of violent attacks and armed operations in Europe during the 1990s, which have had a critical effect on insurgent - host country relations. How can armed operations by insurgents against sanctuary states be explained? The use of violence suggested a shift in GIA sanctuary strategy from restraint to coercion/deterrence, or worse, a shifting perception of Europe from sanctuary to enemy territory. The GIA Communiqués may have reinforced the impression that the latter was happening. A Communiqué stated in January 1995 that "the Mujahidin consider anyone aiding the oppressive regime an enemy of Allah […] and as a result he/she becomes a military target".[140] A literal interpretation of such statements may be misleading, however, because it overestimates the insurgents' willingness to take on new targets. Let us first take a look at the extent of the violence perpetrated by the GIA in Europe.

In the period 1994-95, the GIA changed its strategy in Europe. Diaspora cells no longer acted exclusively as support networks, but also performed a number of terrorist operations on European soil. Mainly two countries were affected; France and Belgium, but the extent of GIA armed operations in these countries varied greatly, as we shall see below.

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[139] "In the first press meeting since its foundation two years ago: The Armed Islamic Group in Algeria reveals to 'al-Wasat' its plans and goals (in Arabic)," *al-Wasat* 30 January 1994.

[140] *GIA Communique* 11 January 1995, signed Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Amin, Amir of the Mujahidin in Muslim Algeria.

5.1 Operations in Belgium

There is little doubt that the GIA was particularly active in Belgium, which had a considerable and politically active Algerian diaspora of more than 10,000 people, and a much larger, and potentially sympathetic Moroccan diaspora.[141] Below is a compilation of reports of GIA involvement in acts of violence or threats in the second half of the 1990s.

Violence and Threats Attributed to the GIA in Belgium 1995 - 1999 including acts in which GIA involvement is suspected, but not confirmed.

- In January 1995, alleged GIA-members sent a threatening letter to Belgian newspapers, claiming that they had placed a bomb under one of the Prime Minister's cars. They demanded that the European Union cut its diplomatic ties with Algeria. Police searched the cars, but found no bomb.[142]

- In August 1995, there were bomb threats against three railway stations, as well as the airport in Brussels.[143]

- In December 1995, a policeman was seriously injured during a car chase, as a grenade was thrown from the car he was pursuing. The car allegedly contained two Bosnians and a Moroccan, all GIA members. The episode resulted in the uncovering of a GIA-network smuggling weapons between Belgium and Luxembourg.[144]

- In January 1996, Belgian police discovered a car full of explosives during a routine control. The two Algerians in the car started shooting at the police, and thus managed to escape.[145]

- In March 1998, when Belgian police raided a GIA-safehouse in Brussels, its occupants became involved in a shoot-out with the police.[146]

- In June 1999, alleged GIA-members made new threats against the Belgian government. They demanded that imprisoned Islamists be released, and that previously expelled activists be allowed to return.[147] The government was given a 20 days' deadline to meet the demands, or else, there would be "massacres where throats will be slashed and churches and other buildings destroyed".[148] When the deadline expired, nothing happened, however.[149]

- In October 1999, a man who claimed to represent the GIA made a bomb threat against the subway system in Brussels.[150]

The episodes above underline the tactical nature of the GIA-perpetrated violence. The shoot-outs were the result of GIA-activists trying to escape detainment and the threats, which were not followed up, came mainly in response to large-scale arrests of GIA-members. For instance, the bomb threats against the railway stations may be connected to the recent exposure of an important support network, engaged in gunrunning, fundraising, document forgery and

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[141] For figures on the size of the Muslim diaspora in Belgium, see Vertovec & Peach (1997), p.17.

[142] "Hardline Algerian group threatens Belgian PM," *Reuters* 18 January 1995.

[143] Bert Lauwers, "Minister says Belgium not target for GIA attacks", *Reuters* 29 August 1995.

[144] "Belgians arrest Algerian Islamic Militants," *BBC* 6 March 1998; "Arrested GIA Terrorist Suspects of Bosnian nationality," *AFP* 4 April 1996, via *FBIS* (FBIS-TOT-96-014-L); "Trial of alleged Algerian Islamists opens in Belgium," *BBC Monitoring Summary of World Broadcasts* 22 November 1999; "Police Regret Netherlands Freing GIA Suspect," *La Libre Belgique* 20 June 1996, via FBIS (FBIS-TOT-96-019-L).

[145] "Stumbling onto a terrorist network," *Asia Intelligence Wire/Asia Times* 5 February 1996.

[146] Douglas Hamilton, "GIA suspect keeps Belgian police at bay", *Reuters* 6 March 1998.

[147] "Belgium police probe holiday terror threat," *Reuters* 20 July 1999.

[148] "Belgium studying Algerian rebel threat," *Reuters* 27 June 1999.

[149] "Belgian GIA 'bloodbath' deadline arrives quietly," *Reuters* 15 July 1999.

[150] "Gendarmes Look for GIA Parcel Bomb in Brussels Subway", *Antwerp De Financieel – Economische Tijd* 20 October 1999, via FBIS (FBIS-WEU-1999-1020).

trade with stolen property,[151] which was probably led by former FIS-representative Ahmed Zaoui.[152] The network was uncovered in March 1995, as a result of information received from French intelligence. Moreover, the massacre threats in 1999 occurred just after the GIA-activists that were captured in March 1998 had been convicted.[153] At the time, Belgian authorities were negotiating their extradition with France, and the threats may have been an effort to prevent the extradition.[154] This would indicate that GIA considered Belgium to be different from France, where a long-term terror campaign was launched. The threats to coerce Belgium and the EU to sever ties with Algeria, if indeed issued by GIA, were not followed up. We will therefore argue that the GIA still considered Belgium a 'sanctuary', not 'enemy territory', but **a policy of 'coercion/deterrence' was applied on a tactical level.** It reflected increased frictions with the Belgian authorities and forced the GIA to turn to violence to defend its support infrastructure. The costs of maintaining the sanctuary had risen. As its former policy of restraint apparently no longer worked, the GIA faced the difficult choice between abandoning the sanctuary and transferring to a new and less useful sanctuary or employing a strategy of coercion/deterrence against the Belgian host state. The value of the sanctuary in Belgium where a substantial Algerian diaspora was located and its proximity to the important Islamist networks in France favoured a policy of maintaining the sanctuary, despite the risks involved. Yet the GIA was careful to avoid an all-out war on Belgium.

5.2   Operations in France (1994-95)

Apparently, towards the end of 1994, the GIA changed its strategy towards France from *restraint* to *deterrence/coercion* on a strategic level, and began planning a sustained campaign of terrorist attacks in the host country. The GIA had long warned that this might happen to France, "the mother of Evil",[155] because of French economic and military support for the Algerian government. A GIA communiqué in January 1995 noted that "France has now become a full partner in genocide by paying mercenaries and rewarding its agents and financing arms deals."[156] Many of the GIA communiqués and newsletters from the "Theatre of Operation: Algeria" stressed that the Algerian regime received military aid from outside. The use of foreign helicopters and newly imported combat aircrafts (MiG-25) "which were never seen before"[157] was noted and obviously feared by the GIA guerrillas, who frequently reported that the Algerian government forces shelled rebel-held villages, even using napalm. The military aid, especially Tunisian and French counter-insurgency expertise, was a source of

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[151] "GIA Communiqué warns Belgian Government after Arrests; Minister plays down risk," *BBC Monitoring Summary of World Broadcast* 6 March 1995; "Algerian FIS Demands Belgium Release Official," AFP 8 March 1995, via FBIS (FBIS-WEU-95-046); and "Appeals start Monday against Belgian GIA verdicts," *Reuters* 5 November 1995.
[152] Shaykh Ahmad Zaoui was first acquitted, then convicted by Belgian courts. He has denied being a member of GIA. See "Belgian court convicts suspected GIA-leader," *Reuters* 20 November 1995.
[153] "Belgian court convicts 8 linked to Algerian group," *Reuters* 14 May 1999.
[154] "Belgian authorities take Algerian Islamists' threat very seriously," *Reuters* 27 June 1999.
[155] The term was used in *GIA Communique* No 44 21 May 1996 (on the execution of the French Monks), signed Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Amin, Amir of the Mujahidin in Muslim Algeria.
[156] *GIA Communique* 11 January 1995, signed Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Amin, Amir of the Mujahidin in Muslim Algeria.
[157] *Al-Qital Newsletter* No.33/34, dated 6 and 20 May 1996

much concern.[158] In late 1994, information on extensive French military aid to the Algerian regime leaked to the press and confirmed what the Algerian Islamist insurgents had claimed.[159]

The first GIA operation on French soil occurred on Christmas Eve 1994, when Algerian GIA-activists hijacked an Air France plane in Algiers. Three hostages were killed, before the plane was directed to Marseilles with 180 hostages onboard. The three victims were an Algerian policeman, a French and a Vietnamese diplomat. Most of the passangers were French citizens. The hijackers demanded that the plane continued towards Paris, allegedly to hold a press conference. However, French authorities received information indicating that their real intention was to blow up the airplane over Paris. They therefore decided to storm the aircraft. All four hijackers were killed, while some of the hostages and police officers were injured. The next attack occurred on 11 July 1995, as shaykh 'Abd al-Baqi Sahraoui, a prominent member of the now contending Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), was killed in a Paris mosque. His name had appeared on a 'death list' issued by the GIA the previous day. The terror campaign reached a climax between 25 July and 17 October 1995, when the GIA performed a series of bombing operations inside France, killing 10 people and injuring more than 200. The most frequent targets were subways, but there were also strikes against outdoor markets, a Jewish school, a high-speed train and the *Arc de Triomphe*. Below is a list of attacks, attributed to the GIA, in the second half of 1995.

GIA Perpetrated Violence in France July-November 1995 including attacks in which GIA involvement is suspected, but not confirmed.

- On 25 July a bomb exploded at the St. Michel subway station in Paris. 10 people were killed and 86 were injured.
- On 17 August a bomb exploded near the Arc de Triomphe. 17 persons were injured.
- On 26 August a bomb was found at a high-speed railway track north of Lyon. The bomb was defect and did not explode.
- On 3 September a small bomb exploded at an outdoor market in Paris. 4 people were injured.
- On 4 September a bomb was found in a public toilet near a market south of Paris. Police disarmed the bomb.
- On 7 September a car bomb exploded outside a Jewish school in Lyon, hosting some 700 children. The bomb was set to burst as the pupils came out of the building, but luckily, the school's clock was slow. Nonetheless, 14 others were injured.
- On 6 October a bomb exploded outside the Maison Blanche subway station near Paris.
- On 17 October a bomb exploded on a suburban train in Paris. 29 people were injured, 5 of them seriously.[160]
- On 5 November the GIA planned to bomb an outdoor market in Lille. However, the police managed to expose the plans. 10 people were arrested.[161]

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[158] See for example *Al-Qital Newsletter* No. 33/34 6 and 20 May 1996 and "Tunisian Security Officer Arrested in Algeria," *IslamReport* (American Islamic Group) 23 January 1996.

[159] According to a report from late 1994 it has included helicopters, night-sight equipment for aerial surveillance and other equipment needed for the Algerian regime's counter-insurgency campaign. In addition, there has reportedly been extensive intelligence sharing between Algers and Paris. Information about this co-operation is scarce, and much of French military assistance to Algeria is stated to be covert, although France has acknowledged the sale of some 9 Ecureuil helicopters to Algeria, ostensibly for "civilian purposes". See Robert Fisk, "France Supplies Covert Military Aid," *The Irish Times* 28 December 1994, *http://link.lamic.utexas.edu/menic/utaustin/course/oilcourse/mail/france/0005.html*.

[160] "Paris metro blast is eight bomb attack in France," *Reuters* 17 October 1995.

Police sources believe that the bombing campaign had been planned from abroad, mainly from Algeria, but also from Great Britain, where the GIA's European Headquarters reportedly was situated.[162] GIA-leaders in Belgium and Italy may also have been involved.[163] The GIA in Algeria had sent Boualem Bensaïd to co-ordinate the campaign. His mission was to recruit members, activate 'sleeping GIA cells' and select suitable sites for attacks. He created two or three cells, in Vaulx-en-Velin, Lille and possibly one in Chasse-sur-Rhône.[164]

5.2.1 GIA Cells in Vaulx-en-Velin, Lille and Chasse-sur-Rhone.

The group in Vaulx-en-Velin seems to have been one of the most active GIA cells in France. Its leader, Khaled Kelkal was born in Algeria, but grew up in France and held French citizenship. He spent the winter 1994-95 in Algeria, probably participating in the GIA guerrilla warfare.[165] On 29 September 1995, he was killed in a shoot-out with French police.[166] His fingerprints had been found on a defect bomb at a high-speed railway track. The gun that killed Shaykh Sahraoui was also found in his hide-out.[167] He seems to have been involved in other operations, too, including the bombings of the St. Michel subway station[168] and of the Jewish school in Lyon.[169] Kelkal was probably involved in gunrunning for the GIA. Finally, he took part in a shoot-out with the police in Bron on 15 July, as he tried to force a police roadblock, resulting in the injuring of 4 policemen.[170] His childhood friend, Karim Koussa, has since been convicted of participation in two of these attacks, i.e. the shoot-out in Bron and the attempted bombing of a high-speed train.[171] Neither Kelkal nor Koussa were known to be Islamists beforehand, despite surveillance of such groups by the French intelligence.[172]

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[161] Sandrine Briclot, "French police say they foil street market bombing," *Reuters* 2 November 1995.

[162] After the bombing campaign, London-police raided the apartment of Rachid Ramda, an editor for the news bulletin *al-Ansar* (close to the GIA and probably representing it). They found several communiqués from GIA's "Foreign Affairs Committee", containing orders to the GIA operatives in France. Moreover, the operatives' leader (Bensaid) allegedly called Ramda several times during the campaign, in order to report about the operations. Finally, police found several receipts, indicating that Ramda transferred a large amount of money to one of the terrorists just prior to the campaign. There have also been reports that Rachid Ramda had received some of the money from Usama Ben Laden. See Gattegno & Inciyan, "N'écoutez personne d'autre que le chef du GIA," *Le Monde* 17 January 1996; Thierry Leveque, "Algerian targeted in probe of Paris train bombing," *Reuters* 4 July 1997; and Mickolus (1997).

[163] Gattegno & Inciyan, "L'enquête sur les attentats rélève l'architecture des réseaux du GIA", *Le Monde* 17 January 1996.

[164] Philippe Broussard, "Atttentats de 1995: fin d'une partie de l'instruction," *Le Monde* 8 February 1999.

[165] Pujadas & Salam (1995), p. 22.

[166] Mary Dejevsky, "Terror suspect killed by police in shoot-out", *Independent* 30 September 1995.

[167] Gattegno & Inciyan, "L'enquête sur les attentats rélève l'architecture des réseaux du GIA," *Le Monde* 17 January 1996.

[168] Acacio Pereira, "Les membres présumés du commando lyonnais se présent en copains d'enfance unis par l'islam," *Le Monde* 12 June 1999.

[169] The bomb was made according to a typical GIA 'recipe' and it occurred in Lyon, his 'area of responsibility'. See Robert Pratta, "Car bomb hurts 14 at French Jewish school in Lyon," *Reuters* 7 September 1995.

[170] See Acacio Pereira, "L'ancien chef de la police antiterroriste défend devant la cour d'assises le travail des enquêtuers," *Le Monde* 16 November 2000; and "Boualem Bensaïd condamné à 30 ans et Karim Koussa à 20 ans de reclusion," *Le Monde* 17 November 2000.

[171] "Boualem Bensaïd condamné à 30 ans et Karim Koussa à 20 ans de reclusion," *Le Monde* 17 November 2000.

[172] Pujadas & Salam (1995), pp. 23-24.

The GIA cell in Lille had reportedly been involved previously in gunrunning to Algeria.[173] Bensaïd was its current leader. The group was uncovered as his name appeared in Kelkal's address book. At first, this cell probably functioned mainly as an "auxiliary network" for the group in Vaulx-en-Velin, manufacturing most of their bombs. (An Algerian GIA-agent called Ali Belkacem probably produced most of the bombs, while receiving help from Mohamed Drici and Ali Ben Fattoum.)[174] Nonetheless, Kelkal's group may have produced some bombs themselves, following instructions from a GIA-video.[175] After the police uncovered the cell in Vaulx-en-Velin, the Lille group seems to have assumed a more active role. For instance, an Algerian GIA-agent called Ali Belkacem later confessed that he took part in the 6 October bombing of a subway station and the 17 October bombing of a suburban train, while Boualem Bensaïd's fingerprints were found on the bomb at Maison Blanche. However, Belkacem had probably also participated in the assassination of shaykh Sahraoui, and Bensaïd has recently been convicted for participation in the high-speed train attack (his fingerprints were found on the bomb). Moreover, even if the circumstances of the St. Michel operation are not solved, there are strong indications that Bensaïd was actively involved there as well.[176] Although some have claimed that the Algerian regime may have been behind some of the bombings[177], there can be no doubt that the GIA was the key actor in the bomb campaign. For the operations not mentioned above, the GIA has either claimed responsibility (for instance for the Arc de Triomphe bombing) or/and police technicians are convinced that the bombs were produced by the GIA.

It has not been proven that the group in Chasse-sur-Rhône took part in the bombing campaign. However, 36 of its members have been convicted by French courts for assisting GIA-activists with shelter, false documents, money, recruitment, training, transportation and/or weapons.[178] The group's leader, Safe Bourada, a former activist for the French Socialist Party, has admitted that he had been introduced to Bensaïd and Kelkal.[179] Two French Muslim converts, David Vallat and Joseph Jaime, were important members of the group. For instance, David Vallat may have provided Boualem Bensaïd with a false visa, so that he could come to France.[180] He also stole weapons for the GIA together with Jaime and the cell seems to have planned a bombing attack on a fuel depot in Isère.[181] Some members are believed to have undergone paramilitary training in Afghanistan and Bosnia.[182] Most are born in France, of North African parents. Many of them have denied membership in the GIA.

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[173] Gattegno & Inciyan, "L'enquête sur les attentats rélève l'architecture des réseaux du GIA," *Le Monde* 17 January 1996; and "La deuxième vie de Khaled Kelkal," *Le Monde* 17 January 1996,.

[174] Gattegno & Inciyan, "L'enquête sur les attentats rélève l'architecture des réseaux du GIA," *Le Monde* 17 January 1996; Jon Henley, "Islamists in court for Paris terror campaign," *Guardian* 2 June 1999.

[175] Gattegno & Inciyan, "Les policiers examinent l'hypothèse de relais terroristes francais", *Le Monde* 6 September 1995.

[176] Pascal Ceaux & Jacques Follorou, "Une piste en forme de rébus pour l'énigme de l'attentat de Saint-Michel," *Le Monde* 17 November 2000.

[177] See for instance Sweeney & Doyle, "We bombed Paris for Algeria", *The Guardian* 9 November 1997.

[178] "Militants jailed for French bombing campaign," *BBC* 18 February 1998; and "Thirty-eight accused of aiding Islamic bombers," *BBC* 25 November 1997.

[179] Maurice Peyrot, "Le plaidoyer de Safé Bourada, islamiste de Chasse-sur-Rhône," *Le Monde* 28 November 1997.

[180] Gattegno & Inciyan, "L'enquête sur les attentats rélève l'architecture des réseaux du GIA," *Le Monde* 17 January 1996.

[181] "Militants jailed for French bombing campaign," *BBC* 18 February 1998; and "Eight suspects probed over French 1995 bombings," *Reuters* 12 January 1996.

[182] "Two men detained in French bombing probe," *Reuters* 23 November 1995.

The three cells were allegedly co-ordinated by a group of leaders, which consisted of Ali Touchent (the supposed leader of GIA in France), Boualem Bensaïd, Ali Belkacem and Rachid Ramda (the supposed leader of GIA in Great Britain). Among the convicted, Bensaïd, Belkacem and Koussa are considered the most important. In addition to these three, 21 Islamists have been convicted for participation in the planning of the campaign.[183] At the time of writing, Ramda has not yet been extradited from Great Britain.[184] Ali Touchent was killed in Algeria, allegedly after having spent some time in London, which was increasingly seen as the main European capital and free haven for radical Islamists.[185] Several of the GIA-activists involved in the 1995 bombing campaign went to other European countries afterwards, indicating that other European countries became more important as 'sanctuaries' for GIA activists fighting the dual enemy France and Algeria.

5.3   Return to Restraint after 1995

A striking feature of GIA's armed operations in Europe is their relatively sudden start and end. There have been very few strikes since 1996. Indeed, according to available public evidence, *it has not been proved that the GIA has performed any strikes in Europe after the 1995 bombing campaign*.[186] This cannot possibly be explained by increased police vigilance alone, given GIA's capability to sustain a long-term terror campaign outside Algeria. A shift in GIA's European strategy had obviously taken place twice, namely the decision to stage a sustained campaign of strikes against a sanctuary state, and the subsequent abandonment of that strategy.

The costs of armed operations against sanctuary states in order to deter the host state from assisting the enemy state are usually very high. Bombs, gun attacks and other acts of violence strongly affect public opinion and make it easier for sanctuary states to justify harsh methods in cracking down on the insurgents' support networks. Indeed, France evoked much protest from civil rights activists for its heavy-handed crackdown on suspected radical Islamists.[187] Moreover, acts of violence leave traces that enable the host state's police to identify and

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[183] "Islamic extremists sentenced in France," *BBC* 15 September 1999.

[184] Thierry Leveque, "Mass trial of 1995 bombing suspects opens in Paris", *Reuters* 1 June 1999.

[185] See "Militants jailed for French bombing campaign," *BBC* 18 February 1998; Julian Nundy, "Terror suspect seen in London'," *Reuters* 6 December 1996; and *Executive Intelligence Review* (2000).

[186] In 1996, there was another bombing attack at a subway station in Paris, called Port Royal. Four persons were killed and 94 were injured. Nobody claimed responsibility, and as far as we know, the case has not yet been solved. However, suspicion was immediately directed at GIA. French authorities have later subdued this suspicion. A few months before, a car bomb had exploded in front of a police station in Lille, close to a hotel where the G7 was to hold a meeting. There are quite strong indications that the GIA was responsible. The bomb was probably placed there by the gangster group of Roubaix. Bomb-making materials were found in their hide-out, and the bomb also resembled those of the GIA. See "France denies Algerian GIA claimed train bombing," *Reuters* 12 May 1997; and Julian Nundy, "Shoot-out as the holy war turns to crime", *Sunday Telegraph* 31 March 1996.

[187] According to a report published by the International Federation of Rights of Man in January 1999, French police has frequently resorted to mass round-ups and vague charges against suspected Islamic militants. In some cases people charged with minor offences have been held without bail for as long as five years. In one case where more than 200 people had been rounded up in 1994-95 and charged with activities involving aid to Algerian insurrectionists, the majority of them were formally charged only in 1998. See Robert Swan, "Rough Justice," *Middle East International* No 592 (29 January 1999), p.16. See also reports on racism against Muslims by the British police in *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* (28 February 1999), p.1. For a report of unconstitutional arrest in Sweden, see "Innocent Algerian Held In Sweden Under Anti-Terrorism Law," *Fortress Europe? - Circular Letter (FECL)* No. 37 (September 1995), *http://www.fecl.org/circular/3705.htm*

repress the insurgents. In the wake of the GIA-bombings in 1995, French police not only resorted to mass round-ups and incarceration (sometimes on vague charges) of suspected Islamist militants, but also spearheaded crackdowns on GIA support networks that were co-ordinated throughout Europe.[188] In light of the new repressive circumstances, the GIA seems to have changed its policy in Europe, despite its ideological commitment to fight the Algerian government's European allies. After the 1995 operations the GIA's European department seems to have concentrated on protecting its remaining infrastructure and creating new support networks, rather than preparing new attacks.[189]

In essence, the GIA returned to its pre-1995 strategy of *restraint*. The costs of coercion were deemed too high. Indeed, as a recent study of transnational Islamist radicalism noted, "unlike Palestinian and Shi'ite organisations, the GIA has so far refrained from carrying out 'extortionist' terrorist operations in attempts to free dozens of its members languishing in various European jails".[190] There have been reports of attempted GIA operations after 1995, but available information does not suggest that a new campaign similar to the 1995 strikes was contemplated and planned. Indeed there are serious doubts as to whether the explosives uncovered after 1995 were meant for operations in Europe.[191]

5.3.1   The massive police raid on the GIA support network in May 1998

The massive scale of the police operation against several hundreds of alleged GIA hideouts, safe houses and infrastructure in five countries on 26 May 1998 ahead of the soccer World Cup in Paris strongly suggested that the GIA's European support network had regained some of its strength after the clampdown in 1995. The operation had been co-ordinated at a meeting held in Paris several days earlier and came only two weeks after eight 'suspected Islamic

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[188] "British police mount raids linked to French bombs," *Reuters* 6 November 1995; "Swedish police seek to deport Algerian," *Reuters* 23 August 1995; and "Des réseaux de soutien démantlés en Europe", *Le Monde* 11 October 1995.

[189] Several press reports indicate that they were rebuilding their infrastructure in countries throughout Europe focusing on 'traditional' tasks such as gunrunning, fund-raising, recruiting and sheltering. See "Belgians arrest Algerian Islamic militants," *BBC* 6 March 1998*; Reuters* 5 February 1996; "Algerians on terror charges," *BBC* 26 October 1998*;* "Swiss ban guns for Algerians to stop rebel arming," *Reuters* 3 March 1997*;* Jason Bruke & David Leppard, "London raids foil 'plot for war'," *Sunday Times* 26 October 1997; "Italians arrest alleged Algerian militant," *BBC* 4 November 1998; *Reuters* 21 September 1999; "Paris Courts Sentences Algerian Islamists", *AFP* 17 December 1999, via *FBIS* (FBIS-WEU-1999-1217); "GIA chief Zouabri's brother seeks asylum in Britain," *BBC Monitoring Summary of World Broadcasts* 24 February 1999; "US Embassy: ROS Report on the Dangers of Islamic Fundamentalism," *ANSA* 6 January 2001, via FBIS (FBIS-WEU-2001-0108).

[190] Shay & Schweizer (2000), p.7.

[191] In March 1998, Belgian police raided a GIA safehouse in Brussels. They found detailed information sheets on the upcoming World Championship in Football in Paris (including maps of the stadiums), instructions for bomb construction, chemicals and detonators. Just before the opening of the championship, police thus co-ordinated large-scale operations against GIA-networks throughout Europe. *Nonetheless, they found nothing to indicate that terror operations were planned during the championship*. Moreover, Belgian prosecution authorities have underlined that the brochures found were actually ordinary tourist brochures, and the jailed GIA-activists were only charged for belonging to a support network (supplying forged passports, weapons and money). However, a small bomb did explode two weeks before the championship, in front of France Telecom in Paris. It has not been proved who was behind. Moreover, the police operations exposed indications that the GIA was planning to *assassinate* Dalil Boubakeur*,* the imam of the great mosque in Paris, appointed by Algiers. See "GIA is preparing assassinations in Europe [in Norwegian],"*Aftenposten* 14 March 1998; Vaiju Naravane, "French police round up Islamic militants as preventive measure," *The Hindu* 28 May 1998; Vibeke Knop Rachline, "Fear of terror before World Cup in football [in Norwegian]", *Dagbladet* 23 March 1998; "Eleven suspected Islamic militants on trial in Belgium," *BBC* 29 March 1999; "Police uncover plot to bomb World Cup," *Reuters* 22 March 1998; Vibeke Knop Rachline, "Afraid of World Cup Terror [in Norwegian]", *Dagbladet* 18 May 1998; and "French Police Discover Killing Plan by Islamists Against Rector," *Xinhua News Agency Bulletin* 30 May 1998.

militants' were arrested in London. In the dawn raids in France, 53 people were detained at 43 locations in Paris, Lyon and Marseille and on the Island of Corsica. Among the detainees were Algerian, Tunisian and French nationals suspected of links with Hasan Hattab, a GIA commander in the mountainous region east of Algiers, who had reportedly formed his own splinter group.[192] Officials in France said the raids uncovered documents, computer disks, videocassettes, false identity papers and some £95,000 in cash.[193]

Significantly, hardly any firearms and no explosives were seized. This might well indicate that the GIA support activities had been directed away from the sensitive weapons and explosives procurement and towards less sensitive support activities such as fund raising.[194] This interpretation is supported by police sources that reported that the operations' real aim was "to destroy the network of Islamic groups in Western Europe rather than forestall terrorist acts […] against the soccer World Cup."[195] France had clearly spearheaded the police operation to "kick the anthill" of Islamist support networks, as one French police official put it.[196] Other European countries had agreed to extend a helping hand to the French crusade against the GIA support network. Italian police, for example, who detained nine suspects, stated that the "move was closely linked to investigations carried out by police in other countries into a vast organisation traceable to the GIA."[197] In Germany, where five Algerians were arrested, and documents, computer equipment and videos, but again no weapons, confiscated, police officials merely pointed to the suspicion of a GIA support network, not specific threats of attacks in Europe. The federal prosecutor's office in Karlsrühe stated "investigations are into Algerian citizens suspected of belonging to a group which provides explosives and logistical support to Islamic extremists in Algeria."[198]. Officials in Brussels confirmed that the Belgian police had raided about 10 addresses in Brussels and in the southern city of Charleroi and detained 10 suspects, but neither explosives nor arms had been seized. In Switzerland, two Islamist activists were arrested, Tesnim Aiman and Ressous Hauari, who allegedly had been involved in a network that delivers East European arms to Algeria and forges documents, but again no terror attack plans were reported.

As the evidence from the police operations suggests, the GIA focused mainly on reconstructing its European network and support infrastructure for the Algerian insurgency, rather than planning another long-term campaign of terror in Europe. The police operations led to the arrests of Omar Saïki and Adel Mechat, both reportedly representatives of Hassan Hattab in France and Europe respectively.[199] (Hattab was at that time competing with Antar Zouabri for the leadership of GIA, but has later broken with the GIA to create his own group,

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[192] According to one account, Hassan Hattab in charge of the GIA groups in Boumerdes and Dellys broke away from Zouabri's GIA in September 1996. See B Izel, J. S. Wafa & W Issac, "What is the GIA?" in Youcef Bedjaoui, Abbas Aroua & Méziane Aït-Larbi (eds.) *An Inquiry into the Algerian Massacres* (Geneve: Hoggar, 1999), pp.382ff.
[193] "Police hold 80 Islamists in Europe in run-up to World Cup," *Irish Times* 27 May 1998, p.10.
[194] M S Ahmed, "EU uses World Cup to demonise Islam," *Muslimedia:* 16-30 June 1998.
[195] M S Ahmed, "EU uses World Cup to demonise Islam," *Muslimedia:* 16-30 June 1998.
[196] *Le Monde* 1 November 2000.
[197] *Ibid.*
[198] A prosecutor's office statement, cited in *Ibid.*
[199] "Paris Court Sentences Algerian Islamists," *AFP* 17 February 1999: via FBIS (FBIS-WEU-1999-1217); "French Police Arrest Nine Suspected Islamic Fundamentalists" *AFP* 8 June 1998, via FBIS (FBIS-TOT-98-159); Lara Marlowe, "Police hold 80 Islamists in Europe run-up to world cup", *Irish Times* 27 May 1998; and Caroline Wells, "French crackdown on suspected militants", *Hindustan Times* 29 May 1998.

the "Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat" (*al-jama'ah al-salafiyyah li-da'wah wa'l-qital*)[200].) Mechat and Saïki were extradited from Germany to France. Mechat has later been convicted of supplying weapons and equipment to GIA underground cells, of sending supplies to Algeria and of providing shelter to fleeing underground fighters.[201] Saïki has also been convicted.[202]

Even if the GIA has not performed any attacks in Europe after 1995, there are some indications that strikes were planned during the European Football Championship in 2000. Dutch police arrested three persons after their plans had been uncovered through wire-tapping of telephone conversations with GIA-leaders in French prisons.[203] This may signal a future shift in the GIA's European strategy, although it is too early to draw any conclusions. Such single operations can nevertheless be ascribed to differences within the GIA (or rather, between the GIA and the *salafiyyah*-group of Hasan Hattab) with regard to the wisdom of armed operations in Europe, as well as on other issues, something the assassinations of Algerian Muslim leaders in Europe also underscore.[204] In sum, the claim that the overall GIA policy was to refrain from sustained terror campaigns in Europe in 1996-2000 seems well established.

5.4   Explaining the GIA's Shift in Sanctuary Strategy

How do we explain that the GIA turned to armed operations in Europe in 1995, and its subsequent abandonment of this strategy? The GIA case study suggests that *the coincidence of three factors* were critical in triggering the shift to coercion/deterrence:

- *declining utility* of the sanctuary due to police repression;
- *sanctuary state-enemy state relations* emerged as a strategic obstacle to victory on the battlefield, and a disruption of outside assistance from the sanctuary state to the enemy regime seemed possible; and finally
- the occurrence of *a critical situation,* or turning point on the battlefield, for example, when insurgent gains are either threatened or reversed, forcing the rebels to find new ways of stemming the reversal. Conversely, a critical point is reached when insurgents perceive victory to be imminent and that only a final offensive is needed to topple the regime.

5.4.1   Declining Utility of Sanctuary

The ascension of a new right-wing government in France, and in particular the hard-line Minister of the Interior Mr. Pasqua, had resulted in a much tougher policy towards Islamists in

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[200]There have been rumours that Hattab later was removed from the leadership of this group. "Hattab Faction Officially Announces Its Split from Armed Islamic Group, Chooses New Name," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* 17 September 1998, via FBIS (FBIS-TOT-98-260); and "Hattab Removed as Leader of Salafist Group," *AFP* 5 March 1999, via FBIS (FBIS-WEU-1999-0502).

[201] "Paris Court Sentences Algerian Islamists," *AFP* 17 December 1999 via *FBIS* (FBIS-WEU-1999-1217).

[202] "Court hands down prison sentences on Islamists arrested in 1998", *AFP* 12 December 2000 via FBIS (FBIS-WEU-2000-1212).

[203] These were reportedly Adel Mechat, Mohamed Kerrouche and Nasseredine Slimani. See Gary O'Donoghue, "French footballers 'face terror threat'," *BBC* 20 June 2000.

[204] Mechat was the representative of Hassan Hattab. Kerrouche and Slimani may also have joined this group. Moreover, there are reports that the alleged plans of attacks during the 1998 World Championship were made by the Hattab-faction. See for instance "UK Police Question Eight Suspected Algerian Terrorists" *London Press Association* 13 May 1998, via FBIS (FBIS-WEU-98-133).

France from November 1993 onwards.[205] French police conducted a series of raids against Algerian Islamists, including supporters of the moderate factions. The raids culminated in late 1993 and 1994 with the so-called Folembray and Chalabi-affairs.[206] This led to the uncovering of important support networks in France and to the arrest and/or expulsion of numerous activists.[207] *The benefits of the sanctuary were thus greatly reduced.* It should also be mentioned that France had put pressure on other Western countries to carry out similar operations against Algerian support networks on their territories, thus threatening not only the important French sanctuary, but also key sanctuary states such as Britain (the GIA had its headquarters in London), Germany, Belgium and Italy.[208] French police intelligence had also recently brought about the exposure of an important GIA support network in Belgium.[209]

5.4.2   A Turning Point on the Battle Ground

The year 1995 was a turning point for the GIA. Its successes from the early post-election period (1992-94) had been reversed by the Algerian regime's counterinsurgency effort. After having secured the Algerian oil and gas fields – the source of more than 90% of Algeria's hard currency earnings – government forces had moved to re-conquer areas that had been under GIA and FIS/AIS control since 1992-93. They first captured the suburbs of Algiers in 1993-94 and then began to push into the Islamist strongholds in Blida, Medea and the Mitidja-plateau. Here, in what was later called "the Triangle of Death", government forces failed to dislodge the Islamist insurgents, and thus dual authority emerged with Islamists and government militias competing for the population's loyalty. (The horrendous massacres for which the GIA was blamed, occurred mostly in this area and were probably punitive killings by both parties to deter or punish defection.[210]) In 1993, the Islamists had been overtly confident of their imminent victory in the insurgency. Shaykh Sahraoui, a co-founder of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) stated for example in July 1993 that:

> *"The status of Djitad is now past the danger zone. It has been fully established on the ground. It has moved from a stage of preparation to a stage of confrontation and preparation of the final blow".[211]*

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[205] "France's Pasqua on arrest of Islamists; support for Algerian government," *BBC Monitoring Summary of World Broadcast* 8 August 1994; and John Follain, "France cracks down on Algerian fundamentalists", *Reuters* 9 November 1993.

[206] "France's Algeria Policy", *The Economist* 13 August 1994; "Arms seized in Paris swoop on militants," *Reuters* 9 November 1994; "France frees 12 of 95 held in Algerian crackdown," *Reuters* 11 November 1994; and Catherine Simon: "Les islamistes algériens tentent de consolider leurs réseaux en Europe," *Le Monde* 4 February 1995.

[207] Many of these were treated in a way that was at best legally dubious. See for instance "French Islamists' trial resumes – without lawyers," *BBC* 2 September 1998; "Lawyers object to indefinite detention of terror accused," *Reuters* 1 September 1998*;* "Rights group slams at French terrorism laws," *Reuters* 21 January 1999*;* "French judge rules police framed Algerian militant," *Reuters* 6 July 2000*;* and "Police guard Paris streets after reprisal threat," *Reuters* 7 August 1994.

[208] Paul Webster, "France rounds up Algerian Islamists," *Guardian* 6 August 1994; and Gilles Kepel, "Les arcanes du FIS et du GIA," *Le Monde* 29 October 1999.

[209] See for example Pujadas & Salam (1995), p.18; Michael Cristie, "Germany rejects French blast on Algeria militants," *Reuters* 5 August 1994; and Charles Richard. "Algerian Dissident seeks UK Asylum," *Independent* 6 August 1994.

[210] See Kalyvas (1999).

[211] "Algeria Enters a New Djihad: Interview with with Shaikh Abdel Baki Sahraoui," *al-Munkidh* July 1993, reprinted in http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/algeria.htm#Essays

In April 1994 a pro-Islamist newspaper in Egypt wrote that "reports confirm that the GIA has now assumed nearly complete control over five larger towns in Algeria, including Blida, Médéa, al-Buwayrah, Chlef, and Jijel. […] people say the GIA is preparing a full-scale attack on the capital."[212] The growing self-confidence of the GIA stemmed partly from the fact that by mid-1994 it had emerged as the major Islamist insurgent movement in Algeria. In August 1994 the GIA declared itself an alternative government.[213] It issued ID cards to the population in the territory under its control, collected taxes, staged trials of collaborators and criminals and acted as the local authority. Its battle field reports exuded confidence.[214] In 1995, however, the GIA strongholds in Algeria were no longer secure. In addition, the Islamists' position was threatened by the upcoming November 1995 presidential elections (from which the Islamists were excluded), which would bestow respectability and legitimacy on the military regime.

5.4.3 Sanctuary State-Enemy State Relations as a Strategic Obstacle

By 1995, French-Algerian relations had emerged as a strategic obstacle to the Islamist victory. The Islamists were fighting a crucial battle for international support, and France's backing of the Algerian government was seen as a major obstacle to their efforts to win international recognition. France continued to pour economic aid into Algeria, rallied IMF and World Bank support for the country's faltering economy, and backed the Algerian regime in its adamant refusal to accept international interference in Algeria's "internal affairs", and implicitly in its refusal to recognise the Rome Platform agreed to by nearly all Algerian opposition parties. Due to French support for the Algerian regime, countries like the US and Germany had been persuaded into abandoning their former position of neutrality.

Nonetheless, in 1995 France was still divided on the Algerian issue, with the Foreign Office welcoming the January 1995 Rome Platform for a negotiated settlement, whereas the Ministry of Defence still favoured military aid for the Algerian regime. In the first half of 1995, a US analyst reported that "confidence in the latter [Algerian military] has eroded […] and the newly installed Chirac presidency may tilt policy in favour of a negotiated settlement."[215] Indeed, as a prudent measure, France, Italy and Spain developed plans for emergency evacuation of their nationals including Algerians with dual citizen-ship, and military preparations for evacuation were reportedly "well advanced."[216] Clearly, the GIA and its allies were justified in assuming that a disruption of French-Algerian relations (the host state-enemy state relations) was possible.

5.4.4 Backlash and Return to Restraint, and Transfer

By staging a series of strikes in France, the GIA obviously hoped to raise the costs of French support for the Algerian government, which spanned from political backing on the international scene, to extensive economic and military aid. The GIA might also have hoped to achieve the release of Islamist activists in French prisons. In October 1995, the GIA reportedly

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[212] Ahmad al-Suyufi, "Algeria between the Illusion of Dialogue and Armed Movement (in Arabic)," *al-Sha'b* 8 April 1994.
[213] Skilbeck (1995), p. 6.
[214] See for example *IslamReport* (American Islamic Group) 4 November, 1994.
[215] Lewis (1995).
[216] The last two major WEU defense exercises TRAMONTANA in Spain this year and ARDENT in 1994 in Italy included practice evacuations. See Lewis (1995).

presented *four conditions for stopping the attacks*. Their demands included the cancellation of the upcoming French-Algerian summit, an end to French aid to Algeria, the closure of the French embassy in Algiers, and French condemnation of the presidential elections.[217]

Palestinian and Lebanese Shi'ite groups had adopted similar strategies in the 1980s, and they had succeeded in obtaining informal concessions from the French government. However, the GIA obviously underestimated the threat that the French government associated with Islamic radicalism. Revolutionary insurgents are normally regarded by sanctuary states as more threatening than non-revolutionaries. While it was inconceivable that Palestinian and Shi'ite groups would nurture a revolution in France, it was precisely the fear of revolutionary Islamism spreading among the disadvantaged North African populations in French suburbs that had triggered France's hostile policy towards the Islamist insurgents in Algeria. Hence, the GIA's terror campaign in France failed and provoked a forceful response by France. The country spearheaded a European-wide crackdown on Algerian radical Islamists, threatening the GIA's infrastructure and support-networks throughout Europe. The costs of the coercion-deterrence strategy were thus extremely high, even though the GIA did win a few concessions, for example that the French-Algerian summit was cancelled. (The French President announced that he would not shake the Algerian President's hand, which made the Algerians cancel the summit.[218]) Although European countries have moved further towards a supportive position vis-à-vis the Algerian regime after 1995, the GIA has maintained its policy of restraint, including partial transfer to other sanctuaries. Rebuilding the support-networks once again became a top priority, a network that had been dangerously stretched and exposed during and in the aftermath of the bombings.

5.5   Alternative Interpretation: The GIA as a vehicle for the Algerian regime

An alternative interpretation of the GIA's armed operations in 1995 can be construed based on the premise that the GIA was thoroughly penetrated by the Algerian intelligence from 1994 onwards. Such an interpretation allows for the assumption that the Algerian regime considered the mainstream FIS its main foe and deliberately encouraged FIS's rivals, including the GIA. An encouragement of the more extremist elements within the Algerian Islamist insurgents would serve several purposes. It would weaken the FIS as an umbrella organisation for the Algerian Islamist opposition, and it would counter international pressure for a negotiated settlement of the Algerian conflict. Following this interpretation, the Algerian regime would attempt to drive home the message that the Islamist insurgents were nothing more than criminal 'terrorists' with whom no deal could be reached. To this end, the regime would then have encouraged the GIA to export its armed operations to Europe. GIA-perpetrated terrorism in Europe would also encourage the European host states to suppress the Islamist support networks, which were deemed vital to sustain the insurgency in Algeria. Indeed, the terrorist attacks in Europe and the brutal massacres in Algeria were extremely effective in turning the Europeans and the US against the Islamist insurgents.

There is at least circumstantial evidence of regime encouragement of the more extremist GIA faction to the detriment of the FIS. For example, reports from human rights noted that

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[217] Mary Dejevsky, "Islamists set price for end to 'Holy War'," *Independent* 10 October 1995.
[218] John Chalmers, "Algeria cancels Chirac meeting in publicity row," *Reuters* 23 October 1995.

increasingly extreme edicts were issued in GIA's name and published in the Algerian press, with the permission of Algerian authorities, despite a strict censorship regime that encompassed statements by FIS leaders.[219] Regime complicity in at least some of the massacres, which reached a peak between 1996-1998, also seems well established. For example, a number of the massacres allegedly perpetrated by the GIA, took place in the vicinity of, and sometimes in the very centre of, army-controlled garrison towns, only a few minutes walks from army barracks. Defectors from the Algerian intelligence services and the security forces repeatedly told of significant government involvement in the Algerian massacres.[220]

There is little empirical support for the Algerian regime involvement in the European attacks, however, although some reports may be interpreted as circumstantial evidence of Algerian government complicity. During the hijacking crisis in December 1994 France accused the Algerian government of withholding vital information. A defector from the Algerian intelligence service testified about Algerian regime's involvement in at least two of the Paris bombings in 1995. A US intelligence report, read open in a recent court case in the UK stated there was no evidence to link 1995 Paris bombings to Algerian militants, suggesting that one killing at the time could have been ordered by the Algerian government.[221] The claim of Algerian regime involvement in the bombings in Europe should therefore not be entirely discarded. It is evident that insurgency support activities in Europe are countered by considerable foreign intelligence presence by the enemy regimes, usually manifest in political surveillance and threats, but more rarely in assassinations and outright terror attacks. There are any examples of liquidations of Muslim dissidents in exile in Europe, the Mykonos case in Germany being the most prominent example.

If this alternative interpretation is correct, it underlines the risks associated with insurgent support activities, namely that of foreign intelligence operations targeting the insurgents abroad. On the other hand, it underscores even more the point already made in this study, namely that the importance of Europe as sanctuary is so great that it tends to override insurgent motivations for using political violence to change the behaviour of sanctuary state.

6   CONCLUSION

Although the GIA in their ideological writings would lash out in all directions against perceived enemies of Islam, they could not afford to be so generous in dispensing punitive strikes in their real-world armed operations. Indeed, contrary to common wisdom on the indiscriminate, senseless and wanton violence perpetrated by the GIA, this study reveals a rather cautious use of scarce resources in order to maximise the benefits of the European

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[219] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 1999.*

[220] See for example Izel et al (1999); John Sweeney & Leonard Doyle, "Algerian Regime Responsible for Massacres: Algeria regime 'was behind Paris bombs'," *The Guardian Weekly* 16 November 1997, p.1. 2001; John Sweeney, "Algeria: policemen confess they killed for the state," *The Observer* 12 January 1998; M A Sheikh, "Algerian junta linked to gruesome massacres, Paris bombings and killings of foreigners," *Muslimmedia* 1-15 December 1997; and Human Rights Watch, *World Report 1999.*

[221] John Sweeney & Leonard Doyle, "Algerian Regime Responsible for Massacres: Algeria regime 'was behind Paris bombs'," *The Guardian Weekly* 16 November 1997, p.1; and Richard Norton-Taylor, "Terrorist Case Collapses After Three Years," *The Guardian* 21 March 2000.

sanctuaries to support the insurgents in Algeria. Our results indicate that the GIA was first and foremost an insurgent movement, not an eclectic sect for whom the mere use of violence was redeeming. Selectivity characterised the GIA use of violence in the European diaspora. The high costs, which accrued from international operations, meant that the GIA had to be very selective as to whom they could afford to attack. And the strategy was abandoned when it did not pay off. These results indicate that those who study Islamist insurgent movements should devote more efforts to analysing patterns of their real-world activities, rather than attempting to understand radical Islamism merely through analyses of ideological scriptures.[222] It also points to the utility of an insurgent-sanctuary model for understanding patterns of international terrorism in an era of globalisation.

The case study of the Armed Islamic Group, using an insurgent-sanctuary model also points to the broader issue of non-state actors in current international relations. It demonstrates the new vitality of diaspora communities in general and insurgent groups in particular, as a third actor in what was previously often a two-level game between host-state and homeland. Factors associated with globalisation such as increased transnational migration, improved communications, and the new 'power of identity' have contributed to the increased impact of insurgencies overseas on domestic European politics.[223] Globalisation has made European security increasingly vulnerable to unresolved violent conflicts, however geographically distant they may be. The ongoing Islamist insurgencies in the Muslim world, mostly against non-democratic regimes, have forced European policy-makers to ponder hard about the blurred lines between a legitimate and illegitimate insurgency, and between 'freedom fighters' and 'terrorists'.

The existence of insurgency support activities poses a number of problems not only because of its impact on host state - home state relations, but also due to its potential to put significant strains on host state - diaspora relations on the European continent. Undoubtedly, insurgency support activities have contributed to making current integration efforts of the Muslim diaspora population more difficult. Criminal violence associated with support networks such as illegal fund raising, and extortion practices jeopardizes the general status and safety of diasporas and encourages the growth of rightwing anti-immigration sentiments. On the other hand, heavy-handed suppression of everything that smacks of insurgency support activities may alienate important segments of the diaspora from the host state.

So far, the European response has mainly been to adopt tougher anti-terrorism policies, such as the banning of insurgency support activities of selected 'terrorist' groups. Evidently, Europe has followed the US lead under the banner of 'draining the terrorist swamps'.[224] However, future crackdowns on Islamist support networks in Europe may backlash and lead to a change in insurgent strategy vis-à-vis European countries, as the GIA case study has shown us. This will probably only happen in those European states which suppress a wide range of support networks while at the same time strongly supporting the Islamists' enemy regimes politically and militarily.

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[222] This point is also made in Lia (1998), a historical study of the rise of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers in the 1930s and early 1940s.
[223] Manuell Castels' phrase in *The Information Age: Volume II*.
[224] US Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism* 1999.

There is no quick fix to this policy dilemma. It should be stressed, however, that if policy measures are confined to more domestic counter-terrorism and control measures only, they will probably only have a short-term effect. This is not to say that illegal insurgent support activities should be abetted or ignored. Rather, traditional counter-terrorism policies must be accompanied by vigorous efforts at addressing and resolving the violent conflicts, which drive the insurgency support activities in the diaspora communities. In this light, the US prescription of 'draining the swamps' seems misplaced. The European states will be ill advised to adopt a one-sided policy of repression of insurgency support activities, which fails to address seriously the socio-economic and political causes and complexities underlying these conflicts.

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