



The Years of Terror (II)

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BERLIN (Own report) - Following the recent terror attacks, international pressure has been mounting on a major supporter of global jihadism - Saudi Arabia, a close German ally. In London, leading politicians from the opposition are calling on the British government to finally publish an investigation of the - presumably Saudi - financiers of British jihadis. Protest against the western powers' pact with the Saudi ruling clan is being raised also beyond Europe's borders. The youth league of the world's largest Islamic organization, the Indonesian Nahdlatul Ulama, for example, has published a declaration accusing the West of ignoring the direct correlation between the Saudi Salafist crusade "and the spread of terrorism worldwide." For decades, Saudi Arabia has been promoting Salafi jihadi milieux throughout the world - partly in alliance with Germany, partly with Berlin's de facto approval - significantly strengthening them in Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Sahel, North Africa, the Middle East and the European countries with Muslim populations, such as Kosovo, as well as in Southeast Asia - in Indonesia and in the Philippines. While milieux supported by Saudi Arabia have increased their terror also in Western Europe, Berlin is continuing its cooperation with Riyadh.

Jihad at the Hindu Kush

"Since the 1970s, Saudi Arabia has been a major financial source for rebel and terrorist organizations" according to an analysis commissioned and published by the European Parliament in 2013.[1] The analysis describes the emergence of current jihadism in Afghanistan since 1979, supported by Riyadh and Washington to drive Soviet Armed Forces out of Afghanistan and overthrow the Kabul government. Saudi organizations were helping with finances and arms, assisted in setting up Mujahidin training camps and established religious schools at the Hindu Kush, through which the Wahhabi Salafist version of Islam was propagated both in Afghanistan, and in the bordering regions of Pakistan. The future Taliban leader Mullah Omar, for example, had been educated in Saudi religious schools, as was Jalaluddin Haqqani, initiator of the Haqqani network, which was largely supported by Saudi Arabia in the 1980s and has since become one of the major terrorist organizations at the Hindu Kush. Osama bin Laden, who later established al Qaeda in Afghanistan, has been the most famous beneficiary of

the Saudi-US assistance to jihadism. The Federal Republic of Germany had also been a participant in the anti-Soviet cooperation project of the 1980s. (german-foreign-policy.com reported.[2])

Jihad in Syria and Mali

The investigation commissioned by the European Parliament also shows how Salafist jihadi organizations have been able to systematically win influence in other countries of the Arab world and in the Sahel. This is particularly true for Syria, where the Saudi government and Saudi private financiers were supporting Salafist jihadi militias, once the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad began.[3] Famous Syrian Salafists, such as Adnan al-Arur, who lived in Saudi Arabia in exile, used Saudi television channels to gain important influence in the developments in their home country. The wide-ranging support helped to strengthen particularly Salafist jihadi organizations during the course of the war. Riyadh's ally, Berlin, which shared the objective of Assad's overthrow, complaisantly looked on. Morocco and Mali are other examples described in the investigation. Already in the 1970s, Saudi Arabia had bought unobstructed access to Morocco, for its Salafi crusade, by financially supporting Rabat in its combat for the control of Western Sahara. This has favored the emergence of jihadi terror in the new millennium, according to the EU's analysis. The investigation also indicates that important Salafi jihad leaders in Mali were trained in Saudi Arabia or had received Saudi financial aid - including Iyad ag Ghali, the leader of the notorious jihadi organization Ansar Dine.[4]

Radicalization in Europe

The Salafi crusade waged by Germany's close ally, Saudi Arabia, is having extensive consequences, even beyond the heartlands of the Arab world, beyond Central Asia and the Sahel. Kosovo, the illegally seceded Serbian province, with a population of 95% Muslims, is one example. In Kosovo, according to a report appearing in the US press last year, Saudi-orientated clerics began spreading Salafist Islamic teachings soon after the NATO invasion in 1999. They had "a lot of money" and a lot of Salafi literature, and built a lot of mosques. 240, of the over 800 mosques, have been built since the war, with long-standing moderate imams being replaced by Salafis, oriented on the Saudi model of Islam. As usual, also in Kosovo, the Salafist crusade has reinforced jihadism. From 2014 to the spring of 2016, alone, 314 Kosovars have been identified, who have gone abroad to join the Islamic State, the highest number per capita in Europe. Officials ascribe this radicalization clearly to Saudi influence.[5]

Radicalization in Indonesia

Salafi milieux and jihadi organizations are gaining influence in Southeast Asia, thanks to Saudi missions. Indonesia, whose traditional Islam is considered moderate, is one example. Since the end of the 1960s, Riyadh has established a number of institutions in Indonesia, systematically promoting a Saudi-type Islam. Probably, the most influential of these is the Islamic and Arabic Studies Institute of Indonesia, or "Lipia," the Indonesian

initials, in Jakarta. Lipia teaches the Arabic language and Islamic law, and is a subsidiary of the Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh. "Curricula and teaching materials reflect the ideology of the Saudi state," according to one analysis on the institute.[6] Since its founding in 1980, tens of thousands have graduated from Lipia, serving as propagators throughout the country. They have actively contributed to the shift in the country's religious climate, consequently facilitating the growing influence of Salafist views - and, for the first time, more than 100,000 participated in mass demonstrations last fall, calling for the capital's Christian mayor to be removed from office allegedly for blasphemy - under trumped up charges. In Indonesia, as well, jihadi coalitions have formed within Saudi-oriented milieux. For example, the Pesantren Ngruki Qur`anic school, founded in Java's major city, Solo, with Saudi finances in 1972, is rumored to have connections to the Jemaah Islamiyah organization, accused of the terrorist attack killing 202 people in Bali on October 12, 2002.

Terrorism in the Philippines

Even the currently re-emerging jihadism in the southern Philippines can, in part, be traced back to Saudi roots. Abdurajak Janjalani, the founder of the Abu Sayyaf terrorist organization, in operation on the island of Mindanao, had studied in the early 1980s in Saudi Arabia, where he received his religious orientation. Thereafter he is said to have joined the jihad in Afghanistan. Upon his return to the Philippines, he founded the Abu Sayyaf - in part, with Saudi financing, which not only was in support of the organization, but was also used to build mosques, schools and other facilities in regions under Abu Sayyaf's control. Not only Janjalani, but also other members of the Abu Sayyaf leadership had studied in Saudi Arabia or joined the "holy war" at the Hindu Kush against the Soviet army, under western-Saudi leadership. Abu Sayyaf recently made headlines with the murder of a German yachtsman. It is currently engaged in the bloody battle for control of the city of Marawi on the island of Mindanao.

Global Consequences

Of course, western governments are aware of the global consequences of the Saudi's Salafi crusade. "Between 2009 and 2014," Farah Pandith, former US Special Representative to Muslim Communities, officially "traveled to 80 countries." "In each place I visited," Saudi Arabia's religious influence had "an insidious presence," displacing historic, culturally vibrant forms of Islamic practice; changing the local sense of identity and considerably strengthening Wahhabi-Salafi Islam, she reported in late 2015. Funding all this was Saudi money, which paid for things like the textbooks, mosques, TV stations and the training of Imams.[7]

Closely Allied

In the meantime, international resentment is mounting over the pact that the West - Germany included - has maintained with Saudi Arabia, which has always furnished Riyadh the necessary political cover for waging its Salafist crusade. In Great Britain, since the recent terrorist attacks, leading politicians of the opposition have begun

insisting that an investigation into the - presumably Saudi - financiers of British jihadis be finally made public.[8] In Indonesia, Gerakan Pemuda Ansor, the youth league of the world's largest Muslim organization, Nahdlatul Ulama - exemplary for the voices of moderate Muslims in various countries throughout the world - issued a declaration stating, "for more than fifty years, Saudi Arabia has systematically propagated a supremacist, ultraconservative interpretation of Islam." There is a "direct correlation" between the Saudi Salafi crusade "and the spread of terrorism worldwide." US government policy ignores this and maintains its close alliance with Riyadh.[9] The same can be said for Germany. Chancellor Angela Merkel recently visited Saudi Arabia and expanded the economic, as well as the military, cooperation with that country, without consideration of that country's promotion of terrorism.[10]

<https://www.german-foreign-policy.com/en/news/detail/7318/>