



START

Momin Khawaja: Mechanisms of Radicalization

*Report to the Office of University Programs,
Science and Technology Directorate,
U.S. Department of Homeland Security*

August 2016

National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
A Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Center of Excellence
Based at the University of Maryland

8400 Baltimore Ave., Suite 250 • College Park, MD 20740 • 301.405.6600

www.start.umd.edu

About This Report

The authors of this report are Clark McCauley, Research Professor of Psychology at Bryn Mawr College, Thomas Quiggin, Senior Researcher at the Canadian Centre of Intelligence and Security Studies at Carleton University, and Sophia Moskalenko, research fellow at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). Questions about this report should be directed to Clark McCauley, cmccaule@brynmawr.edu.

This report is part of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) project, “Radicalization of Momin Khawaja,” led by Clark McCauley.

This research was supported by the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate’s Office of University Programs through Award Number 2012-ST-061-CS0001, Center for the Study of Terrorism and Behavior (CSTAB) CSTAB Project 2.5 made to START to investigate the understanding and countering of terrorism within the United States. The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the official policies, either expressed or implied, of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or START.

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The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) is supported in part by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate’s Office of University Programs through a Center of Excellence program led by the University of Maryland. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics and social and psychological impacts of terrorism. For more information, contact START at infostart@start.umd.edu or visit www.start.umd.edu.

Citations

To cite this report, please use this format:

McCauley, Clark, and Thomas Quiggin, Sophia Moskalenko. “Momin Khawaja: Mechanisms of Radicalization,” Final Report to the Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. College Park, MD: START, 2016.

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Executive Summary

Momin Khawaja is a Canadian citizen serving a life sentence for material support of terrorism. He was arrested in 2004 in connection with a U.K. bomb plot, and the trial record includes hundreds of pages of his emails and blog posts that describe his childhood, high school, college, and work experiences. His own writing thus provides a detailed record of his radicalization to both extreme ideas and extreme action. This report focuses on his first commitment to violent action, when in 2002 he attempted to join the Taliban in fighting Western forces in Afghanistan. He was too late; the Taliban were defeated before he could join them. But his attempt to join the Taliban makes Momin Khawaja an early example of a currently salient problem: a Muslim who leaves the safety of a Western country to join in jihad against Western forces in a Muslim country. Analysis of this early example of a Western foreign fighter indicates that he was self-radicalized to go alone to join the Taliban, that he fits the *caring-compelled* profile suggested for lone-actor terrorists, and that his strong emotional reactions to the suffering of the Ummah distinguish him from the many Muslims who share his ideas but do not take action. Possible implications for counterterrorism are discussed.

Introduction

Our research project focused on understanding a particularly well-documented trajectory to political violence. Mohammad Momin Khawaja, born in Canada, is currently in a Canadian prison after being convicted of providing material support for terrorism, including design of a radio detonator for a group involved in a U.K. bomb plot uncovered in 2004. Khawaja, who wrote blog posts and emailed extensively, left a rich trail of texts describing his political awakening, opinion radicalization, and radicalization to action. In this report we describe these transitions in considerable and chronological detail (see Appendix 1 for personal and political timelines), then offer an analysis of the mechanisms of radicalization that first moved Khawaja to violent action. We argue that, although Khawaja was convicted for offenses related to the 2004 bomb plot, he was self-radicalized to go alone to join the Taliban in 2002. He is thus an early example of a Western ‘foreign fighter’ such as today tries to get to Syria to join Islamic State. His history preceding his attempt to become a foreign fighter is the focus of this report.

Khawaja’s emails and blog posts became part of the court record of Khawaja’s trial; there are no privacy issues in quoting these texts. Perhaps most useful is the email correspondence (about 200 pages of Word files) between Khawaja and Zeba Khan between August 2003 and February 2004; Khawaja offered and retracted a marriage engagement with Khan during this period. His blog posts from 27 September 2003 to 26 March 2004 (just before his arrest 29 March 2004) are available in the form of a 3MB pdf file. Also useful is Justice Douglas Rutherford’s “Reasons for Judgment” in Khawaja’s court case (64 pages released in 2008, available at <https://www.unodc.org/tldb/pdf/Canada%20case%20law%20Khawaja%20.pdf>).¹

It is important to note a limitation in the texts available. Khawaja’s emails and blog posts are from 2003 and 2004, the period during which Khawaja’s actions made him liable for prosecution. The prosecutors were less interested than we in the early days of Khawaja’s radicalization, which culminated in his trying to join the Taliban in 2002. Thus the texts relating to his feelings and actions in the years between 2000 and 2002 are retrospective reports, most often from his emails to Zeba Khan in Pakistan between 2003 and 2004. The emails in which Momin Khawaja describes events and feelings in his past are subject to errors and biases, although we believe that as the material unfolds, a persuasive portrait emerges of Khawaja’s radicalization of opinion and action.

This report is a case study of one individual’s radicalization to political violence. No quantitative analyses were used; the study’s conclusions are based on in-depth qualitative analysis of Khawaja’s writing, his actions, and the political background against which these were set. As with all qualitative analysis, the usefulness of the conclusions depends on the judgment of the investigators.

¹ Mr Justice Rutherford, Reasons for Judgement - Momin Khawaja, 2008/10/29, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Ottawa, Canada, Court File Number 04-G30282, paragraph 23.

The Early Years and Political Awakening: 1979-2000

The timeline starts with Khawaja's birth on 14 April 1979, and continues through his political awakening and clear signs of radicalized opinions seen in September of 2000. This section also identifies important factors influencing Khawaja's life, including his views on music, friends, and alcohol as well as his experiences living abroad following his father's employment.

History Matters

Momin Khawaja's mother and father were born in Kashmir,² although later they moved to Rawalpindi in Pakistan. As Khawaja explains:

My family background from my dad and mom's side is Kashmir. Their families moved to the Rawalpindi area long ago. So Rawalpindi is their home as well.³

When India and Pakistan gained their independence from the British Empire in August 1947, the future of Kashmir, a predominantly Muslim territory between India and Pakistan, was left unclear. There ensued a prolonged conflict between India and Pakistan over the borders of Kashmir, with India controlling most of the territory. This conflict brought violence to the inhabitants of the disputed territory and wars between India and Pakistan.

The conflict over Kashmir was important for Muslims around the world, many of whom saw Kashmiri Muslims as victims of Indian oppression made possible by Western indifference. Omar Khyam, the leader of the UK bomb plot that involved Momin Khawaja, made it clear during his trial that the events and history of the Kashmir conflict had a direct effect on him. At trial, he stated that:

Kashmir was a very big issue in my family. When it was a British colony, India and Pakistan were one country under the British. In 1945 there was a partition when Muslim countries were split off from India.⁴

² The Ottawa Citizen, *Momin Khawaja: The road from fun-loving teen to terror suspect*, published on 23 June 2008. The article is available online at: <http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=61d14370-d12d-47f0-8e69-23722cc5f663>.

³ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated 14 Aug 2003 01:34:09 +0000.

⁴ See the BBC World News Service *Profile: Omar Khyam* which was dated Monday, 30 April 2007, 13:53 GMT 14:53 UK. It is available online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6149794.stm.

Another key member of the plot, Anthony Garcia (aka Rahman Benouis), who was born in Algeria in 1982 but moved to the UK at the age of five,⁵ also stated that the Kashmir issue was at the bottom of his radicalization process. Anthony and his brother Lamine had attended a series of political meetings in 1998 and 1999 discussing the conflict. During his trial in the UK, he recounted how he had seen videos of abuse of Muslims in the Indian controlled areas of Kashmir:

It was the worst thing anyone could have seen. Little children sexually abused and women... and I still remember it quite clearly.⁶

Salahuddin Amin, another plot member, also had an abiding interest in Kashmiri issues. When the Crown Attorney made his opening statement at the UK trial for Operation Crevise, this point was specifically noted.⁷

It is fair to assume that Khawaja shared the Kashmiri grievances expressed by his co-conspirators. Far-away conflicts, such as those in Kashmir, Palestinian Territories or Chechnya, can reverberate around the world. Nonetheless, although many thousands care about these conflicts, only a few individuals move toward political violence. A closer look at individual experiences and circumstances is required to understand what moves the few who engage in violence.

Momin Khawaja – The Early Years (1979-1993)

The parents of Momin Khawaja are Dr. Mahboob Khawaja (born 1942)⁸ and Azra Khawaja (born 1952)⁹. They were both born in South Asia at a time of great conflict and stress in the areas of their birth. They moved to Canada from Pakistan in 1975¹⁰ in order for Mahboob Khawaja to pursue his studies.¹¹

⁵ For this and further information on Anthony Garcia, see the Monday, 30 April 2007 BBC Profile at:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6149798.stm

⁶ BBC World News, Profile- Anthony Garcia, dated 30 April 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6149798.stm

⁷ See the Opening Statement of UK Crown Attorney in *REGINA v OMAR KHYAM, ANTHONY GARCIA, NABEEL HUSSAIN, JAWAD AKBAR, WAHEED MAHMOOD, SHUJAH-UD-DIN MAHMOOD, and SALAHUDDIN AMIN*. A copy of this statement can be found at: <http://www.canada.com/story.html?id=408dc2ed-d950-4ee5-a4b7-392eb5faaf34> which is dated 23 March 2006.

⁸ Fred Sherwin, *Saudis detain father of local terror suspect*, Orleans Online, Dated 31 March 2004. The article is available online at: <http://www.orleansonline.ca/pages/N2004033102.htm>.

⁹ *Arrested Canadian Pakistani Linked to British Raids*, Daily Times, Thursday, April 01, 2004. The article can be seen online at: <http://www.islamicawakening.com/viewnews.php?newsID=1230&> <http://www.orleansonline.ca/pages/N2004033102.htm> Mahboob The 62-year-old professor had been teaching at a polytechnical institute in Yanbu, Saudi Arabia for the past 18 months and has travelled abroad extensively in the past without incident. ... Over the years Khawaja has written a number of articles and a book on Islamic fundamentalism and conflict resolution. He has often been critical of weak Arab leadership and American supremacy in the Middle East.

¹⁰ The date of 1975 is given in the Reasons for Sentence, Court File NO.: 04-G30282, Dated 2009/03/12, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, paragraph 10, although some sources give the date of 1967.

¹¹ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Sun, 17 Aug 2003 05:54:06 +0000.

Momin was born in Ottawa on 19 April 1979,¹² the third of five children. He has an older brother (Qasim) and an older sister (Sabeen, born 1977)¹³ as well as two younger brothers. The two younger brothers are Tanzeel (born in 1984) and Moshan (born 1986).¹⁴ The younger brothers were born in Toronto.¹⁵

The year 1979 produced several conflicts with impact on Muslims around the world, including Momin Khawaja. The Soviet Union launched an invasion of Afghanistan, which would last ten years, claim hundreds of thousands of lives, and create radical groups such as al-Qa'ida. In Iran, the secular regime headed by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was overthrown and replaced by the Shia-inspired government of Ayatollah Khomeini. In Saudi Arabia, the government was shocked when the main mosque in Mecca, the holiest site in all of Islam, was violently taken hostage by a radical who considered himself the new "mahdi"¹⁶ or redeemer of Islam. Each of these three events would have major consequences for politics in Islamic countries, especially in the development of radical groups. The generation of Muslim youth born in or after 1979, including Momin Khawaja, grew up watching the consequences of these events unfolding.

In 1980, when Momin was just over one year old, his mother moved back to Pakistan with her three children while his father was pursuing graduate studies in the United States, at Syracuse University. The family would remain mostly separated for the next three years and then reunited in Toronto where Momin's younger brothers were born. During these years, Momin's father was teaching and studying at the University of Toronto and Momin began elementary school. Later in the 1980s the family was on the move again as the father's employment as a school administrator and teacher took them to Libya, Pakistan and to Saudi Arabia.¹⁷

The Khawaja family spent approximately two years in Libya while the father was teaching at the University of Tripoli.¹⁸ During this period the U.S. air strike against Libya seems to have had a formative effect on him.

¹² Mr Justice Rutherford, Reasons for Sentence, Court File NO.: 04-G30282, Date 2009/03/12, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, paragraph 10.

¹³ Fred Sherwin, *Saudis detain father of local terror suspect*, Orleans Online, Dated 31 March 2004. The article is available online at: <http://www.orleansonline.ca/pages/N2004033102.htm>.

¹⁴ Fred Sherwin, *Saudis detain father of local terror suspect*, Orleans Online, Dated 31 March 2004. The article is available online at: <http://www.orleansonline.ca/pages/N2004033102.htm>.

¹⁵ Isabel Teotonio, *The Ottawa Citizen*, *He liked his job and girls -- that's it, family says*, 03 May 2004. This article is available online at: <http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/features/khawajatrial/story.html?id=271c9e93-fcc3-46a2-ada4-76a26bd75f23>

¹⁶ The concept of a redeemer or prophet who returns to save Islam is not actually in the Qu'arn. However, such beliefs do exist in some of the books of Haddith and they are widely held by many Muslims.

¹⁷ Mr Justice Rutherford, Reasons for Sentence, Court File NO.: 04-G30282, Dated 2009/03/12, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, paragraph 10.

¹⁸ Mr Justice Rutherford, Reasons for Judgement - Momin Khawaja, 2008/10/29, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Ottawa, Canada, Court File Number 04-G30282, paragraph 4.

On April 15, 1986, the United States launched a series of air strikes against Libya, bombing Tripoli and the Benghazi region.¹⁹ The specific reason for the raid, as stated by President Reagan, was Libya's responsibility for a West Berlin night club bombing on 5 April 1986 that killed two American servicemen and a Turkish woman.²⁰ The air strikes failed to kill Libyan leader Muḥammad Khaddāfi.

At the time of the air strikes, Momin Khawaja was seven years old; years later, emailing with Zeba Khan, he clearly remembered the bombings.

I guess the weasels at the white house were bored one day, and decided to test out their latest fire-power by dropping bombs on innocent Muslims. I remember when they'd start bombing, we'd hear the sirens go off so we would run back to the apartment where our mom would hide us underneath the dining table (i still fail to see my mom's logic in how a table would somehow protect us from a bomb, but u know moms...).²¹

Momin's father apparently did not like living in Libya²² and was determined to relocate his family again. They moved to Pakistan, where the family lived for approximately two years, while the father continued his studies in the United States. In 1988, when Momin was approximately eight years old, the family moved again from Pakistan to Yanbu, Saudi Arabia, where they remained for almost five years while the father was the administrator of a polytechnic school. In 1993, as Momin celebrated his fourteenth birthday, the family returned to Ottawa.

While in Saudi Arabia, Momin did not have much interaction with the local population and was sent to a school for the children of foreigners called Yanbu International School K-12.²³ His father was employed as the director of management and planning at the Yanbu Industrial College²⁴ where he had assisted in setting up the original plans for the school.²⁵

In his writings, Momin recounts his time in Saudi Arabia as mostly unremarkable. "The only thing i got from saudi was Quranic recitation."²⁶ He was attending an American-style school and had a "normal life" for a

¹⁹ See the BBC World Report entitled "1986: US launches air strikes on Libya." The full report is online at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/15/newsid_3975000/3975455.stm.

²⁰ Bernard Weinraub, U.S. Jets Hit 'Terrorist Centers' in Libya; Reagan Warns of New Attacks If Needed, New York Times, Published: April 15, 1986.

²¹ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Sun, Thu, 17 Aug 2003 05:54:06 +0000

²² The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Sun, 17 Aug 2003 05:54:06 +0000.

²³ Isabel Teotonio, The Ottawa Citizen, *He liked his job and girls -- that's it, family says*, 03 May 2004. This article is available online at: <http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/features/khawajatrial/story.html?id=271c9e93-fcc3-46a2-ada4-76a26bd75f23>.

²⁴ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Sun, 17 Aug 2003 05:54:06 +0000.

²⁵ Isabel Teotonio, The Ottawa Citizen, *He liked his job and girls -- that's it, family says*, 03 May 2004. This article is available online at: <http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/features/khawajatrial/story.html?id=271c9e93-fcc3-46a2-ada4-76a26bd75f23>

²⁶ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Mon, 01 Sep 2003 02:22:36 +0000.

child of his age. He recalled enjoying watching Western TV programs and cartoons. In 2003, while thinking about his past, he wrote:

When i was in grade 5, i was so into Roald Dahl²⁷ stuff like The BFG, James and the Giant Peach, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, ... and then i grew up!²⁸

While living in Saudi Arabia, the family made a trip to Pakistan. According to Qasim Khawaja, the purpose of the visit was to show the children the birthplace of their parents – the Kashmir region of Pakistan.²⁹ Momin Khawaja does not mention this trip in his writings and it seems that it was not a major event in his life and had little effect on his political consciousness.

At trial, the only reference to Saudi Arabia came in a prepared statement for the court made by his mother prior to Momin's sentencing. The reference was innocuous, but it does confirm Momin's tendency for independence. Her statement to the court includes the following:

Momin was a good child, he was always smiling, but he had an adventurous and independent streak. For instance, when he was 12 and the family was living in Saudi Arabia he once pierced his ear himself using a needle and started wearing one of my earrings.³⁰

Other than these passing references, there is no indication that Momin Khawaja's time spent in Saudi Arabia had any direct effect on his future political views. As a student of an American-style school there is no indication that he was exposed to Wahhabi views nor is there any evidence that he was influenced by any Saudi citizens.

Momin Khawaja – The Return to Ottawa (1993-2000)

Momin Khawaja, along with his mother and siblings, returned to Ottawa in 1993. He did not leave Canada again except for short periods of foreign travel. The family moved into the middle-class suburb of Orleans.

At the time of the move Momin was 14 years old and spent one year at Fallingbrook Elementary School³¹ before entering Sir Wilfred Laurier Secondary School. "Sir Will," as it was commonly known, was a well-integrated school equipped with advanced technology. Students were able to take courses in computer

²⁷ Roald Dahl was a British Norwegian World War Two flying ace who would go on to write a series of children's books such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and the *Big Friendly Giant*.

²⁸ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Thu, 14 Aug 2003 01:34:09 +0000.

²⁹ Isabel Teotonio, *The Ottawa Citizen*, *He liked his job and girls -- that's it, family says*, 03 May 2004. This article is available online at: <http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/features/khawajatrial/story.html?id=271c9e93-fcc3-46a2-ada4-76a26bd75f23>

³⁰ Mr Justice Rutherford, *Reasons for Sentence*, Court File NO.: 04-G30282, Date 2009/03/12, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, paragraph 12, subparagraph 16.

³¹ *The Ottawa Citizen*, *Momin Khawaja: The road from fun-loving teen to terror suspect*, published on 23 June 2008. The article is available online at: <http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=61d14370-d12d-47f0-8e69-23722cc5f663>.

programming and artificial intelligence, and to develop software for an in-house email program called “Binary High” which was sold as a commercial project to other school systems.

The 2001 Ottawa Census shows the city’s population as 774,000 people.³² With the Gatineau area factored in, the metropolitan population of the city was almost one million. The suburb of Orleans is largely populated by civil servants who work for the federal government of Canada and members of the Canadian Forces who work for the National Defence Headquarters. Indeed the Orleans suburb was home to the Canadian local tactical and protection unit of the RCMP, and many members of the RCMP who later would be involved in the Khawaja case lived in Orleans at the time.³³

When the Khawaja family moved into the neighborhood of Orleans, the majority of residents were classified as visible minorities. At the time, Ottawa’s overall population was divided as 80 percent Caucasian and 20 percent visible minorities.³⁴ But the minority presence in Orleans was disproportionately high. In his extensive writings about his childhood experiences and upbringing Momin does not mention any events or situations that made him feel discriminated against or placed him at a significant disadvantage.

It seems that Momin Khawaja’s junior high and senior high school years were rather unremarkable. He had no trouble with the police nor was he ever involved in any form of gang-related or other criminal activity. His only run-in with the law was with the traffic police. According to his brother, Qasim, Momin got a traffic ticket for failing to make a complete stop at a stop sign³⁵ in a fog of teenage rebellion while driving his parent’s car, presumably without their permission. As Momin noted himself in 2003:

I was once a normal kid too. I played basket-ball, went swimming, bike riding, and did all the naughty little things kids do.³⁶

Momin’s friends at the time report that in ninth and tenth grade he did not consider academic studies as a priority. He would often skip classes and play pool at the local “Fire Button” pool hall. He preferred hanging out with his friends and spent his time at the “Country Time” donut and coffee shop.

³² See the City of Ottawa website at: http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/health/publications/hsr/demographics_en.html.

³³ Author TQ was also living in Orleans at the time of the investigation, approximately 1.6 kilometres (one mile) from the Khawaja residence.

³⁴ According to the 2001 Census of Canada, Ottawa’s minority population was 4.89% East and Southeast Asian, 2.45% South Asian, 4.13% Caribbean and African, 0.91% Latin American, 4.53% Arab and West Asian, 3.26% Aboriginal and 0.09% Oceanic. See the Ottawa Direct website at http://www.ottawadirect.info/about_ottawa/ or see the Census of Canada website at: <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm>.

³⁵ Isabel Teotonio, The Ottawa Citizen, *He liked his job and girls -- that's it, family says*, 03 May 2004. This article is available online at: <http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/features/khawajatrial/story.html?id=271c9e93-fcc3-46a2-ada4-76a26bd75f23>

³⁶ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Thu, 18 Sep 2003 13: 10:44 +0000.

Music also played a significant role in Momin's life -- before and after his radicalization. Like many other teenagers, he would listen to the popular music of the day, including "gangsta" rappers such as Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G.³⁷

With my MD player fully charged up from the night before, and 3 miniDics loaded with nasheeds³⁸ at hand, I relaxed for 45 min bus ride and sorta let my mind sink into the lyrics and depths of the words therein... My mind focuses in and absorbs a few of the words. A boy's voice in the background, yes, the nasheed. It's as if my soul is hit with a wave of emotions. In a sweet, innocent and madhlool³⁹ tone he recites these words, a few of which I catch:

I said patience my brother
My people, my people as long as there is suffering
Amongst those people
How will we live here
Soon, we will cry here
Undoubtedly, we didn't show our emotions.⁴⁰

In addition to popular Western music and nasheeds, Momin was also interested in inspirational songs, some of which were used during various military and political conflicts. For example, he liked to listen to the World War Two "Katyusha Song" written in the Soviet Union about a Russian girl who is missing her beloved as he is fighting with the Red Army. He admired the song, even though it was from the country that was locked in vicious conflicts with Muslims in Afghanistan and Chechnya. He writes:

Sis, U know the Katyusha song lyrics?' I read the english version before and thought it was a nice battle hymn with the touchy words. Alhumdulillah, at least Mujahideen dont have to rely on Katyusha's to get psyched up for battle. I heard Germans and others also have variants of that song that they'd use to boost troop morale back in the day.⁴¹

When Momin was attending Algonquin College he began to question peer pressure and the influence people have on one another. He believed that at least part of one's "bad" behavior was due to the circle of friends one had maintained. In his writings, he notes that a person's behavior can be determined by the group of friends one keeps and that it is possible to change behavior by simply changing one's friends.

Well, in high school I had many weird friends. Some used to smoke a lot, others would waste time and hang out with girls all day. Honestly, I'm a weak person. I know I pick up

³⁷ The Ottawa Citizen, 31 March 2004, *Fun-loving teenager became serious, religious young man*. The article is available online at: <http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/features/khawajatrial/story.html?id=0ebddfef-9afc-429c-af44-c76a59ade9d1>.

³⁸ A nasheed is simply an Islamic song. It frequently contains voices only, given a perceived prohibition of musical instruments in Islamic art forms. Most nasheeds are relatively innocuous pieces of music that deal with religious and life matters. However, a limited number of nasheeds, some with videos, are used in videos made by radical and extremist groups.

³⁹ Dua Mashlool—multiplicity of prayer voices

⁴⁰ From the blog of Momin Khawaja, 10 March 2004, http://klshinaat.blogspot.com/2003/12/01/klshinaat_archive.html.

⁴¹ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Mon, 25 Aug 2003 05:29:37 +0000.

bad habits if I'm always around bad people. At first you don't like it, but then slowly you start getting used to it and just accept it as normal. Its like the example of a perfume shop and a garbage dump. If you spend all day in a perfume shop, you'll smell amazing, but if you're at a garbage site all day, you'll reek for days. The same thing goes for friends. If you're having problems with girls, smoking, and just bad behavior, change your circle of friends. Don't spend time with people who are like that. I remember when I left high school I did change as a person, partly because I no longer chilled with the same people anymore.⁴²

Among the "circle of friends" he refers to was a group of students at Sir Wilfred Laurier High School known as the PWA (Pakistanis With Attitude). Momin Khawaja can be seen in a 1996/1997 high school yearbook photo in his junior year.⁴³ He is clearly in good physical condition and has his hair shaved in a classic buzz cut. In the photo are seven other male students, including his older brother Qasim, who was one year ahead of him in high school.

Journalistic accounts of interviews with students at the school suggest that the school was well integrated at the time and no overt racial tensions existed.⁴⁴ Building friendships and initiating dating across racial and linguistic lines were commonplace. The PWA, however, was noted as being a bit different from all other "cliques" or "gangs" of students. They were regarded as being standoffish and preferred not to mix or "hang" with others.

Momin Khawaja was not a big fan of drinking alcohol, but did so on occasion. However, according to his high school friends, by the end of high school, he had quit drinking alcohol altogether.

On 12 May 1999, the year after he left high school, Momin created an email account with Yahoo as mominkhawaja@yahoo.com. The information he put on the registration form was his full name, birth date as 19 April 1979, male and a college grad.⁴⁵ This accurate information demonstrates that in the early 1990s, Momin was not trying to hide his identity when using the Internet. The one piece of misinformation was about being a college graduate. He was registered at Algonquin College at the time of the account's registration, but had not yet graduated.

Momin was known to be generally healthy and did not have any major medical problems.⁴⁶ He did have a mild case of asthma which prevented him from doing some physical activities such as aerobic sports,⁴⁷

⁴² From the blog of Momin Khawaja, 02 December 2003, http://klshinaat.blogspot.com/2003/12/01/klshinaat_archive.html.

⁴³ Enigma, *The Sir Wilfred Laurier High School Yearbook (1999-1997)*, page 12.

⁴⁴ *The Ottawa Citizen*, *Momin Khawaja: The road from fun-loving teen to terror suspect*, published on 23 June 2008. The article is available online at: <http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=61d14370-d12d-47f0-8e69-23722cc5f663>.

⁴⁵ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, page 100.

⁴⁶ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated 01 Sep 2003 02:22:36 +0000.

⁴⁷ *The Ottawa Citizen*, *Momin Khawaja: The road from fun-loving teen to terror suspect*, published on 23 June 2008. The article is available online at: <http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=61d14370-d12d-47f0-8e69-23722cc5f663>.

but in general this did not affect him. He observes that if he avoided strenuous exercise in the cold weather as well as food such as milk and soft drinks, he could lead a perfectly normal life.⁴⁸ He also ran and spent a significant amount of time working out with weights. His high school friends considered him a regular fixture at the YMCA weight room and the Ray Friel Centre where he used the bench press, the squat rack and dumbbells.⁴⁹

Family Status and Income

Poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth is sometimes cited as a cause of radicalization and terrorism. According to Russell Ackoff, who is a professor emeritus at the Wharton School of Business:

The basic problem that spurs terrorism is misdistribution of wealth within the U.S. and around the world. Awareness of this inequality is widespread because of communications.⁵⁰

However, in the Momin's case it seems that poverty or deprivation did not play any *direct* role in his life. In fact, his family could be considered middle class, and his father had steady professional employment. Dr. Maboob Khawaja progressed from teaching positions to administrative and managerial positions at the technical college in Saudi Arabia. Back in Canada, the family lived in a middle class neighborhood with relatively high real estate prices. At the time of Momin's arrest in 2004, the family was living in a mortgage free house, had two children in university, and one son with a three year college diploma. Momin himself describes his family as financially secure:

I'm not sure if u mean me alone, or our family in general, but Alhumdulillah my family is comfortable upper class.... We have no debts, no bills, no mortgage, and thank Allah for what he has given me. I'm a little more comfortable than my family. I say this with a bit of caution, since i'm single with no real expenses, apart from my hobbies, occasional escapades, and Islamic projects, so my income just goes straight to savings.⁵¹

Life at the Khawaja household was not picture-perfect however. The oldest brother, Qasim, had a criminal record for stealing a car. At the first bail hearing for Momin Khawaja, it came out that Qasim had given the owner of the car a fake check and took the car for a "test ride" with no intention of returning the car. The car was then stripped and sold for parts. When convicted of the theft, Qasim agreed to pay

⁴⁸ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated 01 Sep 2003 02:22:36 +0000.

⁴⁹ The Ottawa Citizen, 31 March 2004, *Fun-loving teenager became serious, religious young man*. The article is available online at: <http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/features/khawajatrial/story.html?id=0ebddfef-9afc-429c-af44-c76a59ade9d1>.

⁵⁰ See the conference notes from a presentation by Professor Ackoff of the Wharton School of Business, Public Policy and Management. The write up on his presentation was entitled, *To Combat Terrorism, a Systems Approach is Vital*. The notes are available online at: <http://www.wharton.universia.net/index.cfm?fa=viewArticle&id=414&language=english>

⁵¹ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Mon, 01 Sep 2003 02:22:36 +0000.

restitution to the owner. He made some initial payments, but then stopped and did not pay the remainder of the money owed. With regards to earning an income, Qasim Khawaja often had ideas that were either illegal or simply not practical. Momin Khawaja referred to his older brother's ideas⁵² as "pinky-and-the-brainish."⁵³

Qasim's criminal record would result in Momin's having another minor brush with authority. Qasim had applied for employment with the Government of Canada. As part of a normal security check, Qasim would be required to have his finger prints checked and placed on record. Qasim was aware that he had previously been fingerprinted during his arrest for the car theft. If his fingerprints were compared to a criminal database, it was possible his criminal record would be revealed thus preventing him from being considered for that position. In order to solve this problem, he asked his brother Momin to go through the finger printing process for him. Given that both of them were named "Mohammad" Khawaja⁵⁴, it was possible for Momin to pass as his brother by using the name Mohammad. The ruse initially worked, and the fingerprints were taken. However, in the later stage of the competition process, a discrepancy was noted in the paperwork submitted earlier by Qasim thus unveiling the fingerprint deception. Qasim did not get the job. These events came out at the first two day bail hearing on 06/07 May 2004.

The Influence of his Father

Momin's overall relationship with his father appears to have been very positive. When asked about his father, he wrote the following:

About my dad. He's an ex-professor. Since then, he's moved on to other roles within the institutionalized education field, mostly at the University level. He's the director of management and planning at an Industrial College in Saudi. He came here in the 60's for studies, and a few years after we (my sis, older bro, me) were born, he decided to work in Muslim countries. From then on, we'd had pretty interesting lives. We first moved to Libya, where my father was a prof at the Uni of Tripoli, This was around the mid-80's, so that's right when things started getting messy in Libya. ... We spent about 2 yrs there before my dad decided he'd had enough, so my dad came back here while we relocated to Pakistan for 2 yrs. Then my dad moved to Saudi, and we joined him a few months later. We spent 4 or 5 years there as well. Although living in Saudi was quite fun for the most part, we were thoroughly brain washed in the American schools. Then we came back here, where we've been since the last 10 yrs. My dad was a prof at Syracuse Uni in NY for a while, before he

⁵² The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated 09 Sep 2003 00: 17:06 +0800.

⁵³ The reference here is to the 1990s cartoon series "Pinky and the Brain." The cartoon is based on two genetically enhanced mice that live in a test laboratory. Each night, the pair of mice attempt to take over the world. The "genius" plan is always dreamt up by the intelligent "Brain" while Pinky, who is weak minded, usually causes the plan to fail. Any idea that has no hope of succeeding can be referred to as a "Pinky and the Brain" idea.

⁵⁴ Momin's full name is Mohammad Momin Khawaja and Qasim's full name is Mohammad Qasim Khawaja.

moved back to Saudi a few years ago. Writing is probably his favorite pastime, and he's written stuff for the Muslim World League Journal, and a few other magazines since the 80's.⁵⁵

In January 2004, Momin Khawaja's father returned from Saudi Arabia to visit his family during the Hajj season. Momin Khawaja reports this event with joy, writing in his blog:

Bonnes nouvelles! Mon père est ici sur des vacances de Hajj!⁵⁶

During a four-day bail hearing review in June 2005, Momin was asked by his defense lawyer about his relationship with his father. The purpose of the question was to enquire about the suitability of his father as surety should he [Momin] be released on bail. The response to the question was:

Well, obviously he's my father. I do have I'd say an excellent relationship with my parents. I respect my parents and I'm obedient to my parents, and which is something that obviously the religion Islam requires the obedience to parents, and we have a very good relationship. I talk to my parents about any concerns I have, or daily life, and plans, future, what to do and not to do, and whatnot, and it's a fairly well managed father—son relationship or between parents, as well, with my mom as well.⁵⁷

It is important to notice that Momin's good relationship with his father included agreement that the Muslim world is being victimized by the West. Here is the conclusion of Mahboob Khawaja's 29 January 2015 post titled "Peace or War: Global Political Quagmire."⁵⁸

Would the American and British political leaders learn any lessons from their failure in the on-going wars in Iraq and Afghanistan? For over 13 years, they were not engaged to promote democracy or to protect human dignity and rights or any logical discourse against the ruthless authoritarianism. They are leading a new Crusade against the Muslim world. Every beginning has its end. It is just that most transgressors do not know about it when they crossover the limits of the Laws of God. The Roman, Austro-Hungarian and British Empires collapsed after they violated the limits of Laws of God governing the Earth. Nazis claimed to run the world for thousands of years, but ended up just in 12 years after killing millions throughout the Western hemisphere. Fascism met resistance at its early stages. Every beginning has its end. On the continuing daily massacres of the civilians in Iraq,

⁵⁵ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Sun, 17 Aug 2003 05:54:06 +0000.

⁵⁶ Translation: Good news! My father is here for the Hajj holidays! From the blog of Momin Khawaja, 23 January 2004, http://k1ashinaat.b1ogspot.com/200311_01_klashinaat_archive.html.

⁵⁷ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, page 519.

⁵⁸ (http://www.sapuls,e.com/new_comments.php?id=A10130_0_1_0_M)

Syria, and Yemen and across the territories under ISIL, perhaps, Shakespeare (Julius Caesar) [Brutus standing over Caesar] knew more about the futuristic human ignorance and arrogance and to have imagined the 21st century's favorite political perversion:

And let us bathe our hands in blood, up to the elbows

And besmear our swords

Then we will walk forth, even to the market place.

And waving our red weapons o'er our heads

Let us all cry "peace, freedom and liberty."

Polls show that most Muslims around the world believe that the war on terrorism is a war on Islam; in this regard, Mahboob Khawaja is not unusual. But in many ways his life has been exceptional. He came from Pakistan to the United States in 1967, earned an undergraduate degree from Carleton College and a 1981 Ph.D. in political science from Syracuse University. He has written two books. As professor and educational administrator, Mahboob raised a family, sent children to higher education, and owned a house clear of mortgage in an expensive neighborhood in Ottawa. This is the life of a successful and largely self-made man. Academically he is a specialist in group conflict, especially conflict between Islam and the West.

In short, Mahboob is not just any one of the millions of Muslims who agree that the war on terrorism is a war on Islam. For his family, perhaps especially for his son Momin, Mahboob combines the power of father, academic expert, successful immigrant, and international professional. It cannot be a surprise that Momin shares his father's anguish at the plight of Muslims around the world; the surprise is that Mahboob writes his feelings and Momin turns his feelings to terrorist action. This crucial difference between father and son is explored later in this report.⁵⁹

The Influence of his Mother

Growing up, Momin Khawaja and his siblings spent long periods of time with their father absent for academic and professional obligations. This one-parent household continued during the family's three year stay in Pakistan, starting when Momin was four years old. During Momin's teenage years, from 14 to 17, his father divided his time between home in Ottawa and academic work in Syracuse, New York. After Momin turned 20 years old and continued to live in the family home, his father moved to Saudi Arabia for work. He would return back to Ottawa only after Momin's arrest in 2004.

Azra Khawaja was a "stay at home" mother during her entire marriage and ran an effective household. The house was clean and orderly and Azra Khawaja seemed to be the "doting mother," at least with

⁵⁹ Also by Mahboob Khawaja, "American Politics and the Innocent Children Killed"

(<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article33505.htm>). See also "Saudis detain father of local terror suspect," *Orleans Online*, 31 March 2004 (<http://www.orleansonline.ca/pages/N2004033102.htm>).

regards to her sons. As Momin would note, even when he was already 24 years old, his mother still did his laundry. Once, when she was away in Saudi Arabia to visit her husband, Momin and the other siblings were left to fend for themselves and he makes the following humorous observation about his life without his mother:

Plus, ever since momma left there just seems to be more of those little tasks that need to be done around the house... like, for once in my life i dont get my clothes delivered to the bedroom in nice sorted stacks “one pile of tshirts, one pile of pants (sorted by color, of course!), another pile for the socks and underwear, etc..”. Yeah, i know it seems like I’m a spoiled little brat or something, but honestly, i dont ask for all this to be done. I guess momma just quietly does it all in the background. so mommas Zindabad!⁶⁰

The relationship with his mother appears to have been quite strong. When his mother was absent from the household for an extended period of time, during the Ramadan holiday season in 2003, he makes the following entry in his blog:

sigh –

so... momma is gone for the rest of Ramadhan and she aint comin back till after eid sometime. Ramadhan just isnt the same without her around. I guess i dont really mind not havin pakoras, samosas, and spring rolls and else for Iftar, i’m not into junk food anyways... just like talkin about it and maybe once a month, just one or twice ill let myself indulge with caution. But its not even about the food an all. From wakin u up in the morn, to chillin and talkin with u after iftar, mommas are special. I still have the Bajji⁶¹ around so its not so bad, but u know theres a duff between them cuz mommas are soft in their words and ways of doin things.⁶²

The family’s home was the scene of frequent gatherings for family, friends and community members. Young Momin seemed to enjoy this aspect of his life. He makes a humorous entry into his blog describing the frequent women’s gatherings hosted by his mother at their home. Although the gatherings were intended for women only, Momin makes a suggestion that the “bros” should be able to “participate” too, especially because these events were always accompanied by the large quantities of food. The blog entry notes:

Women’s gatherings, a blessing for bros?

⁶⁰ From the blog of Momin Khawaja, Monday 17 November 2003, http://k1ashinaat.b1ogspot.com/200311_01_klashinaat_archive.html.

⁶¹ A reference to his sister.

⁶² From the blog of Momin Khawaja, 12 November 2003, http://k1ashinaat.b1ogspot.com/200311_01_klashinaat_archive.html.

yep, thats right. As odd as it may seem, Women’s gatherings, Ladies Duroos’, and all those little Islamic get-together’s that our mom’s assemble at each other’s houses once in a while for are actually a huge blessing for the bros. I agree, that sounds weird comin from a bro, but allow the brotha to explain himself.⁶³

He continues with a series of funny suggestions on how the “bros” can either infiltrate the meetings by disguising themselves with a hijab or by getting one of the “sisters” to sneak food for them.

The influence of his mother was not entirely soft, however. As he recalls later in life, his mother would read him stories that had profound effect on him. One story in particular he remembered as his favorite. As he recounts in an email to a friend:

“...i always wanted to be a soldier, cuz when i waz like 5 yrs old: me mum and I would read story bout Ali radiAllahuAnhu and how he chopped off the head of Marhab the kafir and bout jihad and stuff. lolz, i loved it even then and wud repeat that story of Ali radiAllahuAnhu over an over again...”^{64 65}

It was never made absolutely clear if Momin Khawaja’s mother was aware of his violent intentions. At every bail hearing and during the sentencing phase of Momin’s trial, she continued to deny any knowledge of his “jihadist-type thinking.” It would appear, however, that she was at least aware that he was planning to leave Canada to live or travel extensively overseas. In one blog entry, Momin makes a passing reference to his mother and how she worries about his “uncertainties” and his travel plans. This entry is of particular interest, as it was made on 23 January 2004. This was the time he was planning his trip to London to meet with Omar Khyam, leader of the London bomb plot.

With regards to his mother’s knowledge about his travel plans he writes:

My mom overheard me on the phone the other day checking airfare prices to distant destinations, and I think she’s concerned about my uncertainty. You can’t blame a mother for her concern, it’s a part of her nature. I’m sure their hearts understand, but the mind needs to accept. Another escapade, AllahuAlam. A soul in need, will search indeed.⁶⁶

The Year 2000: The Turning Point

⁶³ From the blog of Momin Khawaja, Tuesday 07 October 2003, http://k1ashinaat.b1ogspot.com/200311_01_klashinaat_archive.html.

⁶⁴ Reasons for Judgement - Momin Khawaja, 2008/10/29, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Ottawa, Canada, Court File Number 04-G30282 (Mr Justice Rutherford), p.7.

⁶⁵ For full text of the story, see [http://www.archive.org/stream/AlJihadAnAbsentObligation/JihadAbsentObligation-Azhar_djvu.txt Ali kills Jewish champion Marhab]

⁶⁶ From the blog of Momin Khawaja, Friday, 23 January 2004, http://k1ashinaat.b1ogspot.com/200311_01_klashinaat_archive.html.

On the surface, life for Momin Khawaja continued normally in 2000. He had graduated from high school (Sir Wilfred Laurier High) in 1998 and entered Algonquin College the same year where he studied software development.⁶⁷ In his first year of college, (1998/99), he was still running with a “raucous” crowd, according to his brother Qasim. However, when his grades began to slip, he decided to change his lifestyle and to give up partying.

In the year 2000, he became a regular visitor at the Bilal Mosque on Innis Road in Orleans and started volunteering as a teacher for boys at the mosque.⁶⁸ His focus in life at that time, according to his brother, was “school, work and marriage.”⁶⁹ Later, in 2003, he spoke fondly of his time teaching boys aged five to 15. As he explained in one email:

For the past few years, i've been teaching boys at a weekend Islamic School, mostly ages 5-15. I teach stuff like basics of Islam, Qur'an recitation, Islamic history, and simple Fiqh. Alhumdulillah Its been an amazing experience watching kids learn and progress over the years. It teaches you patience, and helps you understand kids better and how they learn.⁷⁰

In the fall of 2000, there is no indication that Momin was involved in a terrorist plot, nor had he been approached by a recruiter. At that point, he does not appear to be a member of any terrorist or radical group or actively advocating violence as means of addressing political grievances. It is worth remembering that the events of 9/11 were yet to occur and not many people were talking about al-Qa'ida and Osama bin Laden.

Meanwhile, Momin already had a certain set of political views which would eventually lead him towards a more radicalized view of the world. He explains to his prospective fiancé that he considers himself different from others because some events, such as Intifada, cause him to ask questions about the Muslim situation. He reflects upon his earlier life and how he used to be “normal,” but then his life changed and he begun to focus more on what was going on with Muslim communities around the world. In a poignant email to his prospective fiancée he notes:

But once i grew up i felt that something was wrong, terribly wrong. Right around the age of 21 i realized that all the fun pastime activities that everyone was into were a waste of time and did not benefit Islam and the Muslims in any way. so i left everything. When the

⁶⁷ CBC News, The Fifth Estate, *The Canadian: Chronology of Mohammad Momin Khawaja*
<http://www.cbc.ca/fifth/thecanadian.html>.

⁶⁸ CBC News, The Fifth Estate, *The Canadian: Chronology of Mohammad Momin Khawaja*
<http://www.cbc.ca/fifth/thecanadian.html>.

⁶⁹ Isabel Teotonio, *The Ottawa Citizen*, *He liked his job and girls -- that's it, family says*, 03 May 2004. This article is available online at: <http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/features/khawajatrial/story.html?id=271c9e93-fcc3-46a2-ada4-76a26bd75f23>.

⁷⁰ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Mon, 25 Aug 2003 05:29:37 +0000.

Palestinian intifada happened i started looking into my own life and questioning myself as to why our situation was so bad?⁷¹

Radicalization of Opinion and the Transition to Violent Action: September 2000 to his January-March 2002 trip to Pakistan

This section covers Momin Khawaja's life from his political awakening to his first attempt at violent action.

His radicalization was gradual rather than sudden. He did not go from a normal teenager living in an Ottawa suburb to being a terrorist overnight, and there was no one single shocking event that immediately transformed him. The trajectory of his radicalization was shaped by a succession of events that included the Second Palestinian Intifada, the 9/11 attacks, and the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan. By 12 January 2002, some 16 months later after the start of the Second Intifada, Momin Khawaja had been sufficiently radicalized that the courts considered his activities to be "enhancing the ability of a terrorist group to facilitate or carry out terrorist activity." This date is reflected in three of the seven charges laid against him in criminal court.⁷²

The Second Palestinian Intifada

As noted in the previous section, Momin Khawaja's life took a major turn in the year 2000. As he was entering his second year of computer studies at Algonquin College in Ottawa, he began questioning the overall condition of the Muslim Ummah and his own direction and goals. The key beginning of his new line of thinking was the Second Palestinian Intifada of 2000 which is also known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada. The term Intifada translates loosely as "popular uprising"⁷³ or as "shaking."⁷⁴ The Second Intifada was different from the first in a number of key areas.

The First Intifada started on 9 December 1987 and lasted until 1993. It was a mass or popular uprising by Palestinians against the Israeli occupation. The immediate cause of the uprising was the death of four Palestinians who were hit by an Israeli truck in Gaza.⁷⁵ The longer term causes of the uprising were Palestinian frustrations at the failure of the peace process and the ongoing occupation.

⁷¹ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Thu, 18 Sep 2003 13:10:44 +0000.

⁷² Mr Justice Rutherford, Reasons for Judgement - Momin Khawaja, 2008/10/29, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Ottawa, Canada, Court File Number 04-G30282, paragraph one, sub paragraphs 3, 6 and 7.

⁷³ Khaled Hroub, *Hamas - Political Thought and Practice*, (Institute for Palestinian Studies, Washington, DC) page 1. See also Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah - Politics and Religion*, (Pluto Press, London UK, 2002) glossary, page 194.

⁷⁴ Gerard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin, *The History of Terrorism from Antiquity to al Qaeda*, (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2007) page 47.

⁷⁵ See the BBC World News report, *Intifada - Then and Now*, Friday, 8 December, 2000. It is available online at:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1061537.stm.

The First Intifada brought some success for the Palestinians in that the world press coverage frequently portrayed the Palestinians as the weaker victims, using only their hands and rocks, trying to oppose the stronger occupiers who were using tanks and guns.⁷⁶ Seen optimistically, the First Intifada may have been responsible for the start of the Oslo Peace Process.

The Second Intifada, which began in September of 2000, was different; it included many Palestinian suicide attacks, which had been rare in the First Intifada. This tactic created significant casualties on the Israeli side. The Second Intifada continued with varying levels of activity until later 2005 or 2006.⁷⁷ News media around the world showed pictures of stone throwing Palestinian youth, the Israeli victims of Palestinian suicide bombers, and images of suicide bombers before they went off on their missions.

At this time Momin Khawaja was already questioning his own life and the directions he wanted to take. This is not an unusual turn for a young person of 21 years of age. Students in college are expected to be questioning the future. Momin notes that it is his college years that were key in his outlook on life and politics:

In High School, i started to pray and read Qur'an regularly. I still wasn't "into" deen and was just getting by. It wasnt till later in College, the year 2000 Palestinian intifada, when my life changed. I started studying more Islamic books, learning more of the Deen, and following the Sunnah more in my life.⁷⁸

But he was not concerned only with religious belief; his questions were both political and personal.

I realized that "I" must change myself first, must be willing to make a difference. Everyone assumes SOMEONE else is probably doing something to help, so why should "I" bother. Its not true, No one does anything. If I want change I have to do something about it. Change requires hardship, trials. Sacrifice, pain, suffering, loss of life, loss of wealth. Do the Muslims think that Jannah⁷⁹ is so cheap?⁸⁰

Momin Khawaja specifically points to Ariel Sharon's role in the beginning of the Second Intifada. Surrounded by hundreds of riot police, Ariel Sharon, an opposition politician at the time, led a visit to the Temple Mount in September 2000 in the lead-up to a national election in Israel. Temple Mount is sacred

⁷⁶ See the BBC World News report, *Intifada – Then and Now*, Friday, 8 December, 2000. It is available online at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1061537.stm. See also Human Rights Watch - *Israeli Occupied Territories*, available at www.hrw.org/reports/1989/WR/Israel.htm.

⁷⁷ David ESHEL, *Arafat's Intifada: political gamble or strategic folly?*, as published in *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Friday December 1, 2000. See also Yacov Ben Efrat, *Understanding the New Intifada*, *Challenge: A Jerusalem Magazine on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, number 6, page 19, December 31, 2000.

⁷⁸ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Mon, 01 Sep 2003 02:22:36 +0000.

⁷⁹ Paradise.

⁸⁰ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Thu, 18 Sep 2003 13: 10:44 +0000.defensive

to both Jews and Muslims, and this show of Israeli force on the Mount brought immediate riot and stone-throwing attacks by Palestinians. Sharon's reputation has been mixed. To some, he is seen as a brilliant and aggressive battlefield commander.⁸¹ To others, he is responsible for the unnecessary and severe loss of lives among Israeli soldiers⁸² while also being responsible for the massacres of Palestinian civilians.⁸³

Momin Khawaja believed that actions of individuals such as Ariel Sharon (and George W. Bush) justify the actions of a violent defensive jihad. He creates a line of reasoning as follows:

America is at war with Islam, Israelis at war with Islam, so we do not treat Ariel Sharon and George Bush with compassion, do we? They have slaughtered tens of thousands of our brothers and sisters. The blood of the Ummah has been spilt... This is the precise reason for the Jihad, the training, warfare, weaponry, and war-like mentality against those who commit acts of aggression... This is why the preparation and equipment is needed, so that its presence emanates a prowess that deters any who might harbour ill intentions, like the example of a 300 pound football player who does not need to tell people about his strength, since his sight alone will intimidate any.⁸⁴

Momin Khawaja was deeply affected by the Second Intifada. It is primarily this event that moves him from sympathizing with suffering Muslims to approving violent means to defend this cause.

The 9/11 Attacks

The multiple attacks organized by al-Qa'ida on 11 September 2001 have affected the lives of, quite literally, hundreds of millions of people. It is not surprising that Momin Khawaja, already in a period of political awakening, should have been influenced by these events and their consequences.

In an e-mail that Momin Khawaja sent to his prospective fiancée Zeba Khan, he observes the results of the 9/11 attacks. He poses a rhetorical question and then answers it himself:

Would you not say the actions of 19 men on the 11th of September are the most accurate and effective and honourable way of conducting economic Jihad. Imagine if there were ten September 11th, wouldn't that accurately bring down America never to rise again. Yes, I understand that innocent human beings died but there's absolutely no other way of achieving the same objective with the same effect. The intention was to bring down the US economy, not to harm innocent people. I understand that the kuffar used that to wage even

⁸¹ The 1973 Yom Kippur war established his prowess when he crossed the Suez Canal.

⁸² The Mitla Incident resulted in the death of 38 Israeli soldiers in an operation that was seen as unnecessary.

⁸³ Sharon was dismissed as Defence Minister following the Sabra and Shatila Massacres in Lebanon in 1982.

⁸⁴ Paragraph 32 of Mr Justice Rutherford, *Reasons for Judgement - Momin Khawaja*, 2008/10/29, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Ottawa, Canada, Court File Number 04-G30282.

more wars against us but, again, these wars are just killing their economies even more since they're not going as planned.⁸⁵

The 9/11 attacks brought Momin Khawaja's attention to Osama bin Laden. In June 2005, during a bail review hearing in the Ontario Superior Court, court testimony drew attention to this fact. Momin Khawaja points out that bin Laden is the most revered personality to him, second only to the prophet Muhammad and Allah. The following statement was taken from an email and read into the court record:

Shaykh Usama bin Laden is the most beloved person to me in the whole world, after Allah and Nabi Sallallahu Alayhiwassalaam (the Prophet Mohammed) I love Shaykh Usama most in the world, I wish could even kiss his blessed hand.⁸⁶

In his approval of the 9/11 attacks and his love for Usama bin Laden, Momin Khawaja explicitly justifies attacks on civilians. This was a key point at trial, establishing his motive for taking part in the bomb plot for which he was convicted.

The Invasion of Afghanistan

Next to the Palestinian Intifada, the October 2001 invasion of Afghanistan appears to have been the most significant event in Momin Khawaja's path towards violent action. The invasion of Afghanistan was led by the United States and included contributions from several other countries, including Canada. In the West, it would come to be known as *Operation Enduring Freedom*, which began 7 October 2001.

Then right after I got out of College, the invasion of Afghanistan happened. That was a milestone which gave direction to my life, and devotion to efforts of Deen. So, Alhumlulillah for the last few years I've been at the same level of Deen, though i really want more spirituality in my life. I think i need Tahajjud and voluntary fasting, Inbsa'Allah.⁸⁷

As with the people of Palestine, Momin Khawaja felt a sense of connection with the people of Afghanistan. His sense of injustice and oppression was at the forefront of his feelings.

We saw before our very eyes, Afghanistan, the country devastated by decades of war, destruction, famine, disease, was ravaged by the greatest terrorist, namely the United States of America. My words would not do justice in describing what i felt then when it all

⁸⁵ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, transcript pages 140 and 141.

⁸⁶ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Thu, 18 Sep 2003 13:10:44 +0000.

⁸⁷ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Monday, 01 Sep 2003 02:22:36 +0000.

happened. My conscience would tear me apart from the inside knowing what was happening.⁸⁸

In response to these feelings, Momin Khawaja chose to go to Afghanistan to fight. The decision dates are reasonably clear. The invasion began on 07 October 2001 with a series of air attacks. According to testimony given in court during a bail review hearing in June 2005, Momin Khawaja began working at the Livebridge Company in Ottawa on 01 November 2001.⁸⁹ On 03 November 2001, Momin Khawaja took an oath of allegiance to the “Ansaar Youth Organization” through an Internet site. He created a new email address for himself on this occasion which was ansaaryouth@hotmail.com and he used the name “slave of allah” to identify himself. Court testimony would show that he would use this same email address for other purposes at a later date. The oath that he took reads:

I, Momin, take an oath with Allah to give my life for Allah only, as a Mujahid, upholding the banner of Islam, following the sunnah of Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).⁹⁰

The organization’s website advised its members to start collecting money as soon as possible so they could “join the caravan of martyrs.”⁹¹ The website also helpfully suggests to its readership that “*the Jihad is in need of money and we are in need of Jihad.*” The website urges its readership to take action in the face of the situation confronting the Muslim Ummah. The 11-page motivational message of the website appeals to Muslim youth to take action, especially those who are living in the relative comfort and safety of the West.⁹² On the first page of the message, the following extract is observed. Note the focus on the Ummah, which shares much in common with the beliefs of Momin Khawaja:

We are Muslims. We live for Islam, and die in its path. The situation of the Muslim Ummah does not permit us to keep silent whilst Islam is being fought throughout the world, nor can we stay calm whilst the waves of oppression are devastating and striking in every direction.

O Muslims! Know that this Deen does not and will never die, and if it were to die, it would have died the day its Messenger was expelled alone and isolated; None was with him but his Lord and his companions, yet he migrated, gathered the Muhajireen (Emigrants) and Ansaar (Helpers) around him, formed the Islamic State, and strengthened its might.

⁸⁸ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Thursday, 18 Sep 2003 13:10:44 +0000.

⁸⁹ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, transcript page 147.

⁹⁰ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, transcript pages 145 to 147.

⁹¹ The term “join the caravan of martyrs” is a clear reference to the book of the same name written by Abdullah Azzam.

⁹² Ansaar Youth Organization, *Siraat Al-Mustaqeen*.

Verily each and every one among us attests to the fact that one day the Angel of death shall snatch our soul and every one of us will have a taste of death by the order of Allah. This is a promise of Allah as he stated in The book of guidance, the Qur'an: "Say: The Angel of Death, who is set over you, Will take your souls, Then you shall be brought to your Lord." [As-Sajda:ll]

By Allah! There is no guarantee in life except that guarantee that each and every one of us entered this world with, which is that one day we will depart off this world at an unknown hour. In Ruins will be such a person, and a Great Loser will be such a person, on that day who fails the greatest test after been given all the answers.

Later on in this message, young Muslims are urged to drop out from their current positions in society and take up the cause of defensive jihad. The message is graphic and is aimed at creating a sense of guilt in those who do not make an effort to support the cause.

O Youth of Islam! Stop living your lives as slaves of society, and know that we are only the slaves of Allah! O Youth of Islam! Why have you become enemies of yourselves? O Youth of Islam! When will you wake up?

By Allah! We have slept long enough for the Serbs to slaughter over a million of our brothers and sisters in Bosnia, We have slept long enough for the Americans and their allies to murder over half a million children in Iraq; We have slept long enough for tens of thousands of our brothers and sisters in Chechnya to be murdered and tortured. O Youth of the Ummah of Muhammad! Know that at this moment there are wives, mothers, and daughters of this Ummah being raped and slain by the hindus in Kashmir.

O Youth of Islam! Does not your blood boil knowing that the filthy enemies of Allah and his Messenger are raping your sisters?

O Youth of Islam! Where were you when your baby brothers were being gassed to death in Palestine by Jews? Where were you when your baby sisters were shot in the head in Palestine by Jews? Where were you when pregnant mothers of this Ummah had their bellies cut open alive by infidel soldiers in Bosnia, Eashniir, Chechnya, and Palestine?

O Sons of Islam! While you slept, such great oppression took place in lands of Muslims. Iron rods were placed into the private parts of young Muslim girls and then bullets were shot. The innocent girls of this Ummah were raped and murdered. Sisters were stripped in front of her brothers, mothers were raped in front of her sons and wives were raped in front of their husbands.

O Deceived Ummah! Did Allah not remind us of our obligation in the Qur'an:

“And what is wrong with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah, and for those weak, ill-treated and oppressed among men, women, and children, whose cry is: “Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from you one who will protect, and raise for us from you one who will help.”

Clearly, by the time Momin Khawaja makes the oath on 03 November 2001 he has his mind fixed on taking action. By 10 December, Momin Khawaja had left the Livebridge Company after only five weeks of employment. When he left Livebridge, he told the company that he was going to seek other employment overseas.⁹³

In January 2002, Momin Khawaja left the city of Ottawa, Canada with the intention of going to fight with the Taliban in Afghanistan. He would stay briefly in the United Kingdom and there met Omar Khyam for the first time in person. The meeting with Omar Khyam must have had an impact on Momin Khawaja. Abdul Haleem, an alleged al-Qa’ida fighter, was also at the apartment of Omar Khyam. According to the court testimony of Junaid Babar, Abdul Haleem was the planner behind a plot to assassinate Pakistani President Musharraf. The plot would fail despite the availability of weapons and an assassination plan. Haleem’s main contact inside the Pakistani Army was arrested, resulting in the collapse of the plot. For Momin Khawaja, on his first ever trip abroad, meeting with an “authentic” terrorist figure must have proved an exciting moment in his emerging commitment as a foreign fighter for the Taliban.

After the brief stay-over in London, Momin Khawaja departed for Islamabad, Pakistan. His trip to Afghanistan would turn out to have mixed results. His disappointment was evident in the words he would write a year and a half later.

I did try leaving before after afghanistan happened. i left and went to pakistan like many emotionally charged brothers intending never to return, vowing to become the west's' mortal enemies. A few months later, circumstances forced almost everyone back. After i returned, i realized the sad truth, that not many people are really willing to part with their Western lives for the sake of helping the cause of Deen, but i admit that leaving the west is a big step and only whoever Allah accepts will make it.⁹⁴

The circumstances that prevented him from achieving his goal of fighting in Afghanistan were the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and the rapid collapse of the Taliban. By the time Momin Khawaja arrived in Pakistan in mid-January 2002, the initial fighting was over. The infrastructure that would have supported his training, and that of others, was either destroyed or in disarray. Nevertheless Momin Khawaja spent some three months in Pakistan. He stayed at the residence of an uncle, took a computer

⁹³ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, transcript pages 147-148.

⁹⁴ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Fri, 08 Aug 2003 02:29:35 +0000.

course and was able to travel around inside Pakistan. But he was not able to make a meaningful contribution to the fighting in Afghanistan.

In addition to the frustration of not getting into action, Momin Khawaja also shows his frustration with other Muslims who are not ready for action. In his mind, Muslims in the West are too comfortable with their own lifestyles and are not willing to take action as long as they are not suffering in their own lives. The extent of his feelings is clear. The following paragraphs are an extract from an extended email to Zeba Khan where he talks about his feelings on the issues of the Muslim Ummah and the inaction of its members:

Muslims know that they're supporting kuffar troops kill their own brothers and sisters, they just try and ignore it. There's no excuse deep down, just reaping the benefits of life in the west. And the Dawah excuse is pathetic especially now. If the US dollar dropped below the Rupee in worth Pakistan of all places would be flooded with immigrants. and of course we'd all be there for Dawah! although I admit, I did think a bit differently before. But then again, two years ago, no one really thought Afghanistan was gonna happen. then a year ago no one really thought Iraq would happen... and look where we are today. Next thing you know, they roll into Syria and Saudi Arabia. so each day in the west adds to their economic dominance, blood thirsty imperialism and the Ummah's oppression. Its just like Bush said... you're either on their side or our side.⁹⁵

Apparently nothing is really working, and things are just getting worse. Everyone supports the Palestinian cause, are against the Iraqi occupation, are against the Afghani occupation. But, When I say to them, "why don't we go ourselves in person, with our resources, to some of these places and help out our brothers and sisters?" well... then I'm labelled, jazbaati, emotional.. and much worse. Although, my father does agree with me on most of my ideas, he feels that I'm a bit quick in my desire to make a difference, while more time needs to be spent organizing, thinking, and recruiting n' preparing like-minded. Allahu'Alam. Yes, I'm emotional about the state of the Muslim Ummah. While I want action, others are content with only slogans :(⁹⁶

By January 2002, when Momin Khawaja left for Pakistan and Afghanistan, he had moved from being an individual with a political worldview that might be perceived as radical, to being an individual who was undertaking actions to support and participate in jihad in Afghanistan. However, if his activities had ended in March 2002 when he returned to Canada, it is likely that Momin Khawaja would never have come to the attention of security and intelligence agencies. He could have returned to a normal life after his adventure.

⁹⁵ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Fri, 08 Aug 2003 02:29:35 +0000.

⁹⁶ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Sunday, 07 Sep 2003 17:05:16 +0800.

Besides the three major events noted above and his abortive overseas trip, other influences were at work in the life of Momin Khawaja. These included a sense of double isolation, his technical training, and the role of Al Muhajiroun.

The Sense of Double Isolation from both Canadian and South Asian Societies

Momin Khawaja is a second generation Canadian and a “cradle Muslim”—born into a Muslim family rather than a convert. Studies of home-grown jihadists suggest that the majority tend to come from the second generation of immigrants.⁹⁷ One possible explanation is the societal disconnection that second generation individuals feel.

On the one hand, they are growing up in a Western environment, with all the positive and negative aspects of their surroundings. They do not necessarily understand or connect with the values and experiences of their parents, who were born and raised under far different circumstances. On the other hand, they may not always fit in with the new society in which they are living. Their skin color, language skills, dress, habits and food preferences may make them stand out from their peer groups.

Momin Khawaja was born in Ottawa Canada, but by the age of 14 he had also lived in Pakistan, Toronto Canada, Tripoli Libya, and Yanbu Saudi Arabia. His return to Ottawa was just as he was starting his teenage years and was moving from elementary to secondary school.

Although there is no evidence that Momin Khawaja suffered from overt discrimination or racism in high school, there is a clear sense that he did not entirely fit into his middle class status in Ottawa. His ambivalence shows in his references to FOBs—recent South Asian immigrants, Fresh Off the Boat. Momin Khawaja uses the term in an open and friendly way in some cases, and in a rather pejorative sense in other situations.

In a blog entry, he refers to his time at Algonquin College (Fall 1999 to Spring 2002) when he would help other “FOBs” at the college with their homework. He jokingly notes:

We used to have 3 a.m. online parties after I'd email out my programming code to a dozen anticipating FOBs I'm sure many desi⁹⁸ aunties remembered me in their duas [prayers].⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Among others, see Marc Sageman's 08 October 2009 *The Next Generation of Terror* which is available online at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/08/the-next-generation-of-terror/>

⁹⁸ Desi refers to the people or culture of South Asia. It is used commonly with reference to Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal and is not considered to be a pejorative word in most cases.

⁹⁹ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Mon, 01 Sep 2003 02:22:36 +0000

However, while communicating with his prospective fiancé, he was asked about what makes him laugh. One answer was:

What makes me laugh? My youngest bro making fun of FOBS.¹⁰⁰

While preparing later for a trip overseas, he prepares a humorous blog entry about his likes and dislikes on flying. He prefers a window seat and suggests that the others should not be jealous if he gets his Muslim meal first. He also advises that if you kick the back of his seat, you should be prepared to get kicked back. But his reference to FOBs indicates that he wishes to disassociate himself from them.

FOBs best keep a distance of 150 ft. from me at all given times (unless you're a cool FOB [?]). No, I've never been to Cheechaawatnee gaoon, and I do not know your fat friend rungeela bubioo from the pan stall.¹⁰¹

It seems that there are times when Momin Khawaja does not want to be associated with others from his own South Asian community. He clearly is embarrassed by their habits from the country of their birth. While writing about being at the Ottawa Islamic Centre and readying himself for prayers, he notes:

So I'm standing there outside the Wudu stall at the Islamic center, waiting patiently for my turn to get ready for Zuhr. This dude, we'll call him Mr. Zipperfly for the sake of this post, comes out of the toilet and goes ahead me. First of all, this IndoPak-over50-tight-Putloon-wearing uncle steps outta the toilet with the front part of his pants still undone! I'm standing there thinking "auzo billa, theek kar pant ko!" Now, I'm no genius but I believe pants are supposed to be safely secured-and- locked in place by the time you step out of a toilet, no? But that's not all though. Mr. Zipperfly then casually sticks his hand down his pants while tucking in his shirt, and finally finishes his act by yanking up his undone zipper. I've found this habit comes naturally to the IndoPak elders... like they have a license to stick their hand down their pants and fix stuff publicly! I mean, for some of em it's a normal thing, they aren't even ashamed of it. If I see this behavior again, I'll plainly turn my head... "I don't know em, I'm not IndoPak, Curry who?"¹⁰²

In another blog entry, Momin Khawaja reveals a bit about himself while describing a morning sitting at his desk at work. What might be called bad social manners he refers to as FOBish habits.

Another thing I noticed was that FOBish habits are starting to grow on me in a subtle manner. I was having a bagel this morning in my office and right in the midst of enjoying my early morning snack... "BURPH" And I didnt close my mouth to try and subdue it, or

¹⁰⁰ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Tue, 09 Sep 2003 00: 17:06 +0800.

¹⁰¹ From the blog of Momin Khawaja, Thursday 19 February 2004, http://klshinaat.blgspot.com/2003_1201_klashinaat_archive.html.

¹⁰² From the blog of Momin Khawaja, Friday, 26 March 2004, http://klshinaat.blgspot.com/2003_1201_klashinaat_archive.html.

even cover my mouth or anything; I just let out a loud burp. The funny thing is, at first I was like “what thaa but then I shrugged it off as an ‘oh well..” a moment later. My weirdness didn’t stop there though. I opened up my desk drawer and took out a paper clip, straightened it up a bit, then used it pick my teeth. Next thing you know, I’ll be seen walking around with a tiffin carrier filled with salan and roti, wearing suspenders clipped to my pants. God forbid.¹⁰³

Thus Khawaja helps and parties with FOBs at Algonquin College, using “we” to refer to fellow immigrant students. A ‘visible minority’ himself, he seems to have had mostly minority friends from high school onward. But he also makes fun of FOBs for their foreign appearance and behaviors. His FOB references show the ambivalence of a young man who does not feel quite at home with either Euro-Canadians or with FOBs.

Like his co-conspirators Omar Khyam, Anthony Garcia and Waheed Mahoud, Momin Khawaja is a second generation immigrant. His sense of double isolation from both the individuals from the “old country” and the society of the “new country” appears to be a contributing factor in how he formed his political world view. Certainly his social alienation from Euro-Canadians preceded and facilitated the political alienation of seeing Canadian troops sent to Afghanistan to fight the Taliban in late 2001 and early 2002.

Technical Training

A common observation about jihadist terrorists is that many of them come from secular educational backgrounds in the hard sciences, medicine or technology.^{104,105} Momin Khawaja fits this pattern. He could do well in some subjects in high school, including math and biology, even when he was not studying or was spending too much time hanging out with his friends. His father noted his son’s talent in a letter to the judge during the sentencing phase of the trial.

Momin was also very proficient in math. In high school Momin placed the second highest in Ontario on a secondary school math exam.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ From the blog of Momin Khawaja, Wednesday 04 February 2004, http://klshinaat.blogspot.com/2003/12/01/klshinaat_archive.html.

¹⁰⁴ Gambetta, D., & Hertog, S. (2009). Why are there so many Engineers among Islamic Radicals?. *European Journal of Sociology*, 50(02), 201-230.

¹⁰⁵ Groll, E. (2003). There is a good reason why so many terrorists are engineers. *Foreign Policy*, July 13, 2003. Available at <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/07/11/theres-a-good-reason-why-so-many-terrorists-are-engineers/>

¹⁰⁶ Mr Justice Rutherford, Reasons for Sentence, Court File NO.: 04-G30282, Dated 2009/03/12, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, paragraph 13, subparagraph 11.

Momin Khawaja has a three year computer science degree from Algonquin College, but it is of special interest that he also claims that he wanted to be a doctor when he was younger. He appears to have regretted that he did not come to this conclusion earlier in life. As he humorously describes it later:

med skool?? hmmm.... see, preparation for that should begin at an early age, since it requires discipline, dedication, as well as crazy marks. I hung around a lota losers in high school and my focus was off cause of this. Even then, i somehow managed to pull off an A in Biology. My problem was that being around idiots made me lose the zeal to study hard and think about the greater goal rather than just fooling around as a teenager. Occasionally, i'd give up hanging out with some of them, and my marks would sky-rocket and my teachers would be amazed. I've never had a problem getting good grades when I was alone, with no bad company. A few of my teachers knew this too, so they'd advise me once in a while to help out, but at that age i guess i didnt really care. Allahu'Alam, now i wish i had worked hard earlier and perhaps there'd be other opportunities now. I only became studious in College and by then I was already into the compu sci geeky stuff. The real reason why i've wanted to be a doctor is because I'd like to help out in all those Muslim hot spots where there's practically no Muslim doctors available to help. Think about it, how many Muslim doctors do you know that were educated in the West and then went to places like Chechnya, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Palestine, Kashmir. Iraq??? hardly any!¹⁰⁷

He describes how he turned to computer science.

Ok. Im in serious mode now. I chose to go into computer science for money. I knew compo sci. dudes who raked in –ahem –figures many years back so I hopped right on the band wagon. I realized the sad truth late and thought, darn! I shoulda been a doktor. Honestly, i loved the field once i got into it. The mental challenge is awesome and drives you to the next level. Its an adrenaline rush.¹⁰⁸

Momin Khawaja's clearly fits the pattern of a terrorist who has a technical or scientific background. He wanted to help Muslims suffering in conflict zones as a physician, but went for computer science for more selfish reasons—the money and the challenge of writing computer code. Despite the selfish motivation that brought him to computer science, he would not have been able to undertake the remote detonation device that was at the center of his conviction for terrorism.

The Role of Al Muhajiroun

¹⁰⁷ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Tue, 02 Sep 2003 05:19:49 +0000.

¹⁰⁸ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Mon, 01 Sep 2003 02:22:36 +0000.

Momin Khawaja was not directly recruited by Al Muhajiroun. No evidence exists to show that Al Muhajiroun was directly aware of the existence of Momin Khawaja. However, it is also fair to say that had Al Muhajiroun not existed, Momin Khawaja might never have made the connection to enter into the world of British-based terrorism. Thus, the narrative concerning his radicalization cannot be told without brief reference to the group's history.

Al Muhajiroun was a British based radical Islamist group which was formed in 1996 and led by imam Omar Bakri. Under Bakri's leadership, the group was able to construct a network of radical connections in the United Kingdom. Most of their efforts appeared to focus on university and college campuses and the need to re-establish an Islamic Caliphate. The group, known under several different names,¹⁰⁹ was proscribed as a terrorist group in 2010.¹¹⁰

Throughout the time period from January 2002 to his arrest in March 2004, Momin Khawaja's primary contact or "emir" was Omar Khyam. The largely secular home of Omar Khyam was located in Crawley, a London suburb. It was in Crawley that Al Muhajiroun had one of its power bases and it was there that an eighteen year old Omar Khyam attended a series of lectures by Omar Bakri. At trial in the UK in 2006, Omar Khyam told the court that by 1998 he had come to believe in the cause of winning the "freedom of Muslim lands from occupation."¹¹¹

Another key figure in the London fertilizer bomb plot was Waheed Mahmoud. As with Omar Khyam, Waheed Mahmoud had attended Al Muhajiroun meetings in Crawley and in Luton. It was at an Al Muhajiroun meeting that the two leading co-conspirators would first meet.¹¹²

While not charged as part of the bomb plot, Mohammad Junaid Babar had played a role as a "broker."¹¹³ He had been involved in organizing training camps, obtaining supplies and introducing like-minded individuals to each other in violent jihadist circles. Among those individuals he assisted in travel arrangements and training camps were Omar Khyam and Momin Khawaja. Junaid Babar had first entered into radical politics through the Al Muhajiroun in London and worked for Al Muhajiroun in Pakistan.

¹⁰⁹ The other known names for the group are: Call to Submission, Islam4UK, Islamic Path, and the London School of Sharia.

¹¹⁰ The document which proscribes the group is available online at: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/uksi_20100034_en_1

¹¹¹ See the BBC News *Profile of Omar Khyam* published on Monday, 30 April 2007, 13:53 GMT. It is available online at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6149794.stm.

¹¹² See the BBC News *Profile of Waheed Mahmoud* published on Monday, 30 April 2007, 14:39 GMT. It is available online at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6149800.stm.

¹¹³ The term broker is used here as a figure in a loose network who has a "desire to manipulate people as resources in order to move ahead" and who has a "high measure of centrality." The individual involved must have a "certain amount of power and prestige and the time to service his relations." These definitions are based on the works of Carlo Morselli and Jeremy Boissevain. For more information on brokers see

<https://anchors.uow.edu.au/content/groups/public/@web/@law/@ctcp/documents/doc/uow072218.pdf>

In short, Al Muhajiroun was not involved in the fertilizer bomb plot, but provided the personal connections that made the plot possible. Individuals ready to turn radical ideas to radical action found one another in and around Al Muhajiroun; Momin Khawaja connected with these individuals on his way to and from his failed attempt to join the Taliban.

Momin Khawaja's Justification for Violent Action

On 24 October 2004, Momin Khawaja posted an extensive message on his blog site. In this message, he recalls an oppressive instructor he encountered at Islamic night school. It is important to note that Momin's recollections of events that happened to him when he was only five years old are written when he was a 24-year-old man. Therefore, it is difficult to know how accurately the story reflects the reality of the event. Nonetheless, the story does give an insight into his justification for responding to violence with violence.

The posting is one of his longest and came at a critical juncture in his life. He had just returned from Pakistan where he had met with Junaid Babar and provided him with supplies and money to be used for jihadist related activities. He discussed with Babar various issues such as computer viruses they could employ as well as a model airplane with a GPS capability that Momin was building with his brother Qasim. While in Pakistan, Momin also made an attempt to return to the Malakand region. It was in that region where he had earlier attended a terrorist training camp and learned how to fire a series of weapons, and he wanted to continue training, especially firing the rocker propelled grenade launcher¹¹⁴ as he had done on his previous visit.¹¹⁵ He also met with his prospective fiancée (Zeba Khan) and her family on two occasions.

The blog posting included the following paragraphs.

I was about 5 yrs old then, and as most Muslim parents would do, mine sent me to the evening Islamic school madressa at the base of the apartment building where we lived. I guess it was a fairly normal madressa in most terms, kids sitting on the ground with their Arabic Qaidas or Quran mushafs ontop of little make-shift wooden tables, rocking back and forth while reciting and memorizing the lesson for the day. I'll be honest, I hated going to that place. I would much rather have stayed home and goofed around with my mom, or gone outside with my dad, running here and there like a horse and jumping around in the fallen autumn leaves., piles of crunchy, dried maple leaves.

¹¹⁴ The weapon was not specifically identified, but the Soviet/Russian build RPG-7 is in common usage in the area and is popular among insurgents and terrorists.

¹¹⁵ Mr Justice Rutherford, Reasons for Judgement - Momin Khawaja, 2008/10/29, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Ottawa, Canada, Court File Number 04-G30282, paragraph 24.

I hated going there for one reason, the teacher, the Maulana. The dreaded molvi. The salan smelling, paan eating, mean jaahil from the Pind Molvi, who would beat the crap out of the kids at the madressa for hardly any reason at all. I mean, i can understand a teacher tapping you with a pencil, or hitting you on the hand jokingly with a miswak (toothbrush) for not knowing your lesson, but beating kids was fun and games, a source of amusement for this guy. He'd play little tricks with you. A pen would be thrown in your general direction to distract you from your lesson, and if you looked around and wasted time, you'd be called to the front. At this point, you'd either get the beats with a stick or get the pen inserted up-and-down in between your fingers and squeeze! And if he was really having a bad day, he'd make u do the rooster. The "rooster" involved squatting down to the ground, passing each arm underneath your thighs up to your head, and pulling on your earlobes, all the while reading your lesson in this position AND getting a stick.

drove me nuts. I couldnt stand watching this madness, and I knew everyone else felt the same except that no one had the guts to do anything about it. All the desi parents hit their kids anyways, so it made no difference to them if some ignorant molvi did it too. So one day, i get a stick thrown at me. He tells me to pick it up and bring it to him. I knew what was coming, and the thought of it was making my blood boil and my teeth grind. In broken Gujrati-style Hindi he says to me "mai ees sai tujko maruoon ga' (i'm going to hit you with this). I looked at him, and threw his stick back at him and said to him, "I'm going to go to my house and I'm getting MY stick, and MY stick is bigger than YOUR stick, and I'm going to bring it here, and I'm going to beat YOU with it! Do you understand??. It worked! He didnt say a damn thing to me. He didnt hit me. He just told me to go back and sit.

Although he left me alone from then on, i dont think he learned the complete lesson right then. After that incident, some of the older kids at the madressa worked up the courage to stand up to him as well. I heard a kid (teenager) actually fist-fought the molvi a few years later, and the molvi fist-fought back. The kid pounded him and won too! Remember, it only takes one person to start a revolution, to bring about change. [Emphasis added]. The molvi WAS eventually canned, but not before causing his share of trouble.

I had no choice but to say what i said. He was a Zaalim, an oppressor, and there was no other way of standing up to him. Strictly speaking, it is incorrect for a kid to tell off an elder, especially an Aalim, a scholar. But there was absolutely no other way of stopping the madness. What's my point in this? well, its just a reminder that sometimes actions that would normally be NOT allowed, become necessary and even praiseworthy due to the special circumstances surrounding them. If you have no other way of achieving a sincere and righteous objective, except through questionable means, then thats what you have to do. [Emphasis added] Yes, there is a limit to how far you can take this. I would not have

gone home and gotten a knife and went after the molvi with it, but I might have used a water gun and sprayed him ink! Now that wouldda been funnE..¹¹⁶

Note the underlined sections of the text in the final two paragraphs. Here, it seems Momin is using his childhood memories about an oppressive situation to justify violence in defense of the Ummah, even violence against Western civilians. He acted as a five year old with blood boiling; he justified jihad violence in outrage over the suffering of the Ummah. The link between the childhood example and the adult justification of terrorist violence is strong emotion combined with the conviction that he had no choice—violence was the only way to stand up to the oppressor.

Overview of the Radicalization of a Foreign Fighter

The radicalization of Momin Khawaja occurred over a period of approximately 16 months. The process was not linear; he moved further away from violent action when he returned to Canada after his failed attempt to join in jihad in Afghanistan. His father, and others who did not share his need for action, were another moderating influence despite his frustration with those who only talk their sympathy for Muslim victims. But in Momin Khawaja's own words, the main drivers of his radicalization were political events. Increasing religiosity played a role in encouraging identification with the suffering of the Ummah, but radicalization to violent action occurred mostly in response to the Second Palestinian Intifada, the 9/11 attacks, and the Western invasion of Afghanistan.

Three facilitating factors were important in this trajectory.

The double-isolation of a second generation immigrant left Momin Khawaja feeling disconnected both from both his parents' homeland in Pakistan and the Canadian culture in which he went to high school and college. He identified instead with the Ummah, with victim Muslims around the world, which left him no moderating attachments in reacting to Canadian troops joining the fight against the Taliban.

The other two facilitating factors provided means and opportunity. A software engineer in good physical condition but lacking military skills wanted to fight with the Taliban. He needed connections to get to the fight, and he made connections with individuals in London who could help him. After he failed to join the Taliban these connections were the key to continuing in radical action. And without his technical skills he could not have undertaken development of a detonator sought by these same connections for their bomb plot.

¹¹⁶ http://klashinaat.blogspot.com/2003_0901_klashinaat_archive.html dated 24 October 2003.

Disappointed but Determined: Return from Pakistan in March 2002 until his arrest in March 2004

Upon his return from Pakistan to Ottawa in March 2002, Momin Khawaja was disappointed that the primary objective of the trip was a failure. He did not get to Afghanistan and he was not able to become “the West’s mortal enemy”¹¹⁷ as he had hoped. Perhaps equally important, he was disappointed by what he had observed among other Muslims around him and those he met in his travels. As previously noted, he did not think that sympathizing with victims was enough; action must be taken.

His history from return to Canada in March 2002 to his arrest in March 2004 can be told in four sections: supporting jihad from Canada, the invasion of Iraq, training camp in Pakistan, and the last trip to London.

Supporting Jihad from Canada

For Momin Khawaja, life in Ottawa would take on an aura of normalcy. He obtained employment with an Ottawa contracting firm in June 2002 and earned CDN\$500.00 per day.¹¹⁸ The contract position had him employed at the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAIT) as a software developer. His position included working on software that was used in planning and assisting those DFAIT employees who were being posted overseas. His position gave him access to the list of Canadian diplomatic houses, apartments and other accommodations overseas.

Momin Khawaja was still living in his parent’s house, and he had no car, student loans or any other significant debts or expenses. He led a frugal lifestyle, always carefully considering how he spent his money. Even minor expenses, such as a ten dollar hat for winter use, were carefully researched for the best price. He would carry only a small amount of money and would keep track of the prices of coffee and other everyday purchases.¹¹⁹

With steady employment, a good wage and only limited expenses, Momin Khawaja was able to move into another kind of action, this time as a financial supporter. This role of financial supporter would also see him become a recruiter as he sought assistance in transferring money from Canada to the United Kingdom and Pakistan.

Zenab Armandpisheh was a student at Carleton University who was studying chemistry and had dreams of pursuing a medical degree. At the age of 18, she had begun to explore ideas associated with her mixed Muslim/Christian, Canadian/Iranian background. While exploring Internet sites and chat rooms, she met

¹¹⁷ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Friday, 08 Aug 2003 02:29:35 +0000.

¹¹⁸ This would be approximately USD 330.00 or EURO 350.00 per day in 2002.

¹¹⁹ Various expenditures were noted in a series of blog entries from September 2003 to March 2004.

a man named Abdul Raham Adam¹²⁰ who was using the email account wariornul@hotmail.com. As the conversations developed, he asked her for money in order to support his upcoming trip to Pakistan and Afghanistan in December 2002.¹²¹ He told her that she would be helping out “the brothers.”

By the fall of 2002, the conversations had advanced to the point where “Abdul Raham Adam” told Zenab Armandpisheh that he had a contact who was living close to her in Ottawa. He advised her that he could arrange introductions. “Abdul Raham Adam” then contacted Momin Khawaja and told him that there was a woman living in the Ottawa area who could help them with financial transfers. Momin Khawaja, using the name Ibn Hamza, contacted her using his email account ansaaryouth@hotmail.com. He introduced himself and conveyed to her that he needed a woman to send money for the “cause of Allah.”¹²²

In January 2003 Zenab Armandpisheh agreed to open an account at the Bank of Montreal located at 112 Kent Street in Ottawa. The account (#3212-471) was opened in her name, but she gave the debit card to Momin Khawaja. During interviews with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, she confirmed that she had kept all the monthly statements sent from the bank and that the account showed that it had been used in the United Kingdom shortly after she had given it to the man she knew as Ibn Hamza (i.e., Momin Khawaja).¹²³

The testimony of RCMP Staff Sergeant Glenn Martindale in June 2005 revealed how the debit card was used by Omar Khyam.

Banking documents for that specific account that she opened shows that the debit card she had, the one that she gave to Khawaja that was seen in Khyam’s possession, was in fact used in Crawley, West Sussex, United Kingdom on the 1st of February 2003 at 6:18 p.m. to conduct a transaction of 10 pounds Sterling. One minute after this transaction on this same day at the same location a Barclays Bank debit card number 4539 7815 7311 2007 in the name of Omar Khyam was used to withdraw 300 pounds Sterling. .¹²⁴

However, it would not be long before Zenab Armandpisheh would become suspicious about the man she knew as Ibn Hamza. At one point, she would receive two identical emails only moments apart, one from Ibn Hamza and the other from Momin Khawaja. It was, in all probability, a mistake on the part of Momin Khawaja who may have momentarily forgot which alias he was using, or simply an error in using the wrong email account.

¹²⁰ Also known as Anthony Garcia, the name under which he was charged by British authorities.

¹²¹ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, page 124.

¹²² Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, page 125.

¹²³ Zenab Armandpisheh would eventually go on to testify against Momin Khawaja in his 2008 trial. She had begun to believe that her “helping the brothers” may not have been totally legal and she advised Ibn Hamza (i.e. Momin Khawaja) that she would no longer help them. There is no evidence to suggest she was aware of any terrorist plot or jihadist activity.

¹²⁴ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, pages 126-127.

By September 2003, after having met with “Ibn Hamza” approximately ten times, Zenab Armandpisheh began discussing her involvement in money transfers with her friends. Their general conclusion was that she was into a series of events that were “not right.” Zenab Armandpisheh then contacted “Ibn Hamza” and told him that she was closing the account and cutting off all further communications. There was, she stated, \$70.50 left in the account which would be made available to him if he wanted to pick it up.¹²⁵ He never did.

Subsequent to the arrest of Momin Khawaja, she realized that the Momin Khawaja who had been arrested, and “Ibn Hamza,” were in fact the same person.¹²⁶ Zenab Armandpisheh had decided to keep all the documentation she obtained during the course of events and stored it. When approached by RCMP investigators, she was able to produce the documentation, plus the emails to and from Momin Khawaja, that were recovered off her hard drive.¹²⁷

The recruitment of Zenab Armandpisheh did not get very far. She seems to have believed that she was helping to send money for support of “the brothers” in Afghanistan, rather than for terrorist violence in England. At one point Khawaja gave her a number of “inspirational” or propaganda videos, suggesting that she encourage others to watch these. Three of these CDs were a part of the “Russian Hell” series of videos produced in Chechnya. These videos show scenes of Chechens attacking and executing Russian soldiers. Another video he gave to her was titled “*Afghanistan 2001*.” The entire video was of Osama bin Laden giving inspirational messages and discussing the importance of attacks on the United States and the West.¹²⁸ If Momin Khawaja thought that these videos would move others, it is a fair assumption that these videos had helped move him as well.

While using his email account ansaaryouth@hotmail.com, he told Zenab Armandpisheh that

the best thing for Muslims to focus on right now is doing the utmost in helping the Deen through support for Jihad. And this should always be our priority and main concern, that how we can sacrifice the most of ourself, abilities, resources so that Islam is victorious over Kufr and so that the enemies of Allah and his messenger are defeated and detered.¹²⁹

In addition to showing his support for jihad in Afghanistan, the recruitment effort demonstrates the security awareness of the group. When he was first communicating with Zenab Armandpisheh, Momin

¹²⁵ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, pages 1142-144.

¹²⁶ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, page 128.

¹²⁷ Zenab Armandpisheh was not charged in this investigation and she testified as a key witness for the prosecution.

¹²⁸ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, pages 131-132.

¹²⁹ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, page 128.

Khawaja told her that he needed a woman's help specifically because "*sisters don't get caught, brothers do.*"¹³⁰ Given that this was late 2002, Momin Khawaja's appraisal was accurate. Following the events of 9/11, many enforcement and security agencies were looking to trace sources of terrorist financing. The prevailing view at the time was that it was mainly males who were involved in terrorist activities. The decision to use Zenab Armandpisheh was a logical and effective choice.

Security awareness is one thing, but security practices are another. The bank debit card provided by Zenab Armandpisheh was given to Omar Khyam in the UK and it was used multiple times to transfer money. However, in what might be considered a significant lapse in security, Omar Khyam was carrying the card with him as he travelled through security at a London airport. He was pulled aside and searched, revealing the presence of the debit card. Officials at the time were not aware of Omar Khyam's involvement in the terrorist plot. However, they were suspicious that he would be carrying a bank debit card from a foreign country that was issued in someone else's name. Consequently, they made a copy of it and that evidence would prove useful at a later date. Omar Khyam was worried about this and told Momin Khawaja, via email on 10 February 2004, that:

One more thing u remember that bank u opened for us, the kuffs took a photocopy of it recently to make sure ur careful with it, u decide whats the best action if u want to carry on using it or cancel it i will leave that to you...¹³¹

The activities of Momin Khawaja following his return to Canada demonstrate that he was still trying to support jihad in Afghanistan. He continues to be in communication with the Crawley group, especially Omar Khyam, and he is contributing financially to their efforts. With respect to Zenab Armandpisheh, he is also expanding his role from financier to would-be recruiter.

The Invasion of Iraq – 20 March 2003

The invasion of Iraq in March 2003, led by the United States and the United Kingdom, was a momentous event with direct and indirect effects that are still unfolding. The war would have a radicalizing effect on many Muslims, including Momin Khawaja and his co-conspirators Omar Khyam and Waheed Mahmoud. Each of these individuals was an avid follower of the activities and beliefs of al-Qa'ida and saw international events through the lens of al-Qa'ida's ideology.

One reason for the war's radicalizing effect on these individuals, and many others, was that it fed directly into the propaganda of al-Qa'ida and other radical groups. The war was carried out by the United States and the UK (identified by al-Qa'ida as crusader states) against Iraq (identified by al-Qa'ida as a Muslim state) for reasons that were never clear in the minds of many observers around the world. For the

¹³⁰ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, page 125.

¹³¹ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, page 123.

propaganda arm of al-Qa'ida, the invasion of Iraq was a dream come true as it fit their preconceived ideology and worldview. They would exploit this ruthlessly to their own advantage with considerable effect.

Mohammed Siddique Khan, the leader of the 7 July 2005 London suicide bombings, who attended the same training camp with Momin Khawaja, was quite clear that international events motivated his terrorist attack. In a video recording that appeared after he committed suicide in the London attacks, he states:

Your (the West's) democratically elected governments continue to perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world. Your support for them makes you directly responsible ... until we feel security, you will be our targets. Until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people, we will not stop.

While he does not specifically mention Iraq, it is clear that he is speaking in the present tense when he refers to the attacks on Muslims.¹³²

Omar Khyam, the co-conspirator of Momin Khawaja, noted during his testimony at trial that he had been born in the UK and that he believed that he owed allegiance to the UK for that reason. He stated that he had not heard of anyone suggesting attacks against the UK until the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. As he stated during his testimony, "*For the first time, I began hearing that Britain should be attacked.*"¹³³

When he was considering a marriage proposal, Momin Khawaja's fiancée asked him about a number of personal issues. One email exchange included a question from Zeba Khan to Momin Khawaja which was:

Questions pour toi:¹³⁴ When was the last time you got really angry at someone?¹³⁵

Momin Khawaja responded as follows:

Actually, last time i was really really angry was a few months back, when America invaded Iraq. I stopped watching the news after that. my rebellious little protest.¹³⁶

¹³² See more on this as the BBC website at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4208250.stm or see the Al Jazeera article at: <http://english.aljazeera.net/English/archive/archive?Archiveld=14586>.

¹³³ For this and more on the radicalization of Omar Khyam see "*British defendant in terror plot trial tells of gradual conversion to militant jihadists*" in The Guardian by David Pallister, Friday September 15, 2006.

¹³⁴ Translation from French to English: "Questions for you."

¹³⁵ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Mon, 25 Aug 2003 15:44:52+0000.

¹³⁶ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Tue, 26 Aug 2003 04:57:10+0000.

In late 2002 and throughout most of 2003, Momin Khawaja shows a sense of personal frustration that he is not contributing to the various struggles of the Muslim Ummah.

Everyone supports the Palestinian cause, are against the Iraqi occupation, are against the Afghani occupation. But, When I say to them, "why dont we go ourselves in person, with our resources, to some of these places and help out our brothers and sisters?"¹³⁷

In this same email he notes that if he raises this sort of question with those around him, they often reply that he is simply emotional. He adds that even his father thinks he might be a bit quick and should instead spend his time organizing and recruiting.

As can be seen from the above quotations, the invasion of Iraq weighted heavily on the minds of Momin Khawaja and others directly involved with him. As the invasion of Afghanistan moved him to try to join the Taliban, the invasion of Iraq moved him to redouble his efforts to help the 'bros' fight Western occupations.

The Trip to Pakistan and Terrorist Training Camp

Terrorist training camps tend to move individuals from "talkers" to "doers." This was the observation of Junaid Babar while testifying at the 2008 trial of Omar Khyam *et al* in the United Kingdom.¹³⁸ Junaid Babar had been arrested in the United States in 2004 and cooperated with authorities after being convicted of terrorism charges.¹³⁹ Before giving evidence against his comrades, he had considerable experience with arranging terrorist training.¹⁴⁰ When asked about the impact of the camps, he told the court that after the training camp experience, "the guys were talking jihad, praying and quoting the Koran." They were saying "let's go kill the Kufr."¹⁴¹

As will be seen below, terrorist training camps play a key role in understanding the overall radicalization process. The camps have an importance that exceeds the basic physical skills and ideology that are taught. The critical issues from the point of view of radicalization are the effects on the individuals relating to a change in personal beliefs, dedication to "the cause," and group cohesion. Most of the camps

¹³⁷ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Sun, 07 Sep 2003 17:05: 16 +0800.

¹³⁸ Sarah Knapton, Dateline *London: Operation Crevice*, The Ottawa Citizen, Published: Tuesday, June 24, 2008, Originally published on Tuesday, May 1, 2007. This article is available online at:

<http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/features/khawajatrial/story.html?id=96e4f3b4-4b0b-4fa6-8d5e-479c0aaa03d7>

¹³⁹ CBC News, The Fifth Estate, *The Canadian: Chronology of Mohammad Momin Khawaja*

<http://www.cbc.ca/fifth/thecanadian.html>

¹⁴⁰ See, among other references, paragraphs 10 to 21 of Mr Justice Rutherford, Reasons for Judgement - Momin Khawaja, 2008/10/29, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Ottawa, Canada, Court File Number 04-G30282.

¹⁴¹ Sarah Knapton, Dateline *London: Operation Crevice*, The Ottawa Citizen, Published: Tuesday, June 24, 2008, Originally published on Tuesday, May 1, 2007. This article is available online at:

<http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/features/khawajatrial/story.html?id=96e4f3b4-4b0b-4fa6-8d5e-479c0aaa03d7>

attended by various members of this terrorism plot were modest in their infrastructure and training duration, but their impact was considerable. The duration of training can run from days to months, and training objectives can range from basic military training and the handling of light weapons to the use of biological and chemical weapons.

In the summer of 2003, Momin Khawaja attended a brief training session in Pakistan. Other individuals who were at the same camp were Omar Khyam, Omar's younger brother, Shujah Mahmood, Junaid Babar, Anthony Garcia, Jawad Akbar, and Mohamamad Siddique Khan, leader of the July 2005 suicide attacks in the London Tube system.¹⁴²

In Canada, criminal law states that the simply attending a terrorist training camp is considered serious enough to warrant a criminal charge. Momin Khawaja was convicted in 2008 of various criminal charges, one of which was attendance at a training camp.¹⁴³ The two relevant sections in the charges as described in the Criminal Code of Canada read:

83.18 (1) Everyone who knowingly participates in or contributes to, directly or indirectly, any activity of a terrorist group for the purpose of enhancing the ability of any terrorist group to facilitate or carry out a terrorist activity is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years.

83.18 (3) Participating in or contributing to an activity of a terrorist group includes
(a) providing, receiving or recruiting a person to receive training;¹⁴⁴

In September 2003, approximately two months after returning from his second trip to Pakistan for training, Momin Khawaja made the following observations in an email to his fiancée:

It was then, by the will of Allah that i met a brother from England who was in the effort of Jihad, and part of a group of brothers who were leaving to go to Pakistan and join the Mujahideen already in Afghanistan. Although, untrained brothers are not sent to the front lines of Jihad, with the immense favor of Allah I was able to join a few brothers and spend time at a Mujahideen training camp. It was there that we built our spiritual link with Allah, trained in the ways of Jihad, and devoted our lives to the uplifting of Deen and defense of the Ummah.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² *Dateline London: Operation Crevice*, Sarah Knapton, The Ottawa Citizen, Published: Tuesday, June 24, 2008, Originally published on Tuesday, May 1, 2007, <http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/features/khawajatrial/story.html?id=96e4f3b4-4b0b-4fa6-8d5e-479c0aaa03d7>

¹⁴³ Mr Justice Rutherford, Reasons for Judgement - Momin Khawaja, 2008/10/29, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Ottawa, Canada, Court File Number 04-G30282.

¹⁴⁴ The Criminal Code of Canada, Section 83.18. The Criminal Code of Canada is available online at: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/PDF/Statute/C/C-46.pdf>

¹⁴⁵ The Superior Court of Ontario, Case Number (04 G30282) Exhibit 63. Email of Momin Khawaja to Zeba Khan, dated Thu, 18 Sep 2003 13: 10:44 +0000.

A clear effect of participation in the training camp was the sense of camaraderie and bonding that was developed. Momin Khawaja and Omar Khyam in particular appeared to be completely at ease with each other and appeared to hold themselves aloof from others who did not share their experience. The time they had spent in Pakistan gave them “street credibility” and it showed in some of their discussions. One exchange in particular reveals how Momin Khawaja holds himself, Waheed Mahmoud and Omar Khyam at a higher level than others with whom they interact. Khyam and Momin were considered the two leading figures in the plot in the UK. The following extract is taken from the “Reasons for Judgement” in the criminal trial of Momin Khawaja:

[50] Around the supper hour on February 21 after being kept under surveillance as they drove around to a number of places, the probe in Khyam’s car picked up portions of conversation in which Khawaja is discussing electrical and electronic details with Khyam and Mahmood. This exchange is clear.

Khawaja: I can teach you the theory of it. Cover all the facts and all those other bits, then in the summer I’ll set up a course together, someone can deliver it to the grunts of course.¹⁴⁶

The trip to a terrorist training camp was a significant step in Khawaja’s trajectory to terrorism. He gained some experience with weapons and explosive and social bonds with other individuals similarly determines to wage jihad against the West and in defense of the Ummah.

The Final Trip to London

Momin Khawaja probably thought his day was going well as he arrived in London on the morning of Friday, 20 February 2004 at 1115 AM on board an Air Canada flight. The seven hour flight in economy class seating was now behind him and a meeting with one of his best “bros” was ahead of him. He had smiled to himself, knowing that he had been served his breakfast on the airplane ahead of everyone else after having pre-ordered his “Muslim meal.”

At the airport, Omar Khyam probably thought he was having a good day as well. Momin Khawaja had emailed him in January 2004, suggesting that the “hifidigimonster” prototype was working. The email was rather clear:

Praise the most high, we got the devices working. I am gonna try and get a booking asap to come over and see you.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Mr Justice Rutherford, Reasons for Judgement - Momin Khawaja, 2008/10/29, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Ottawa, Canada, Court File Number 04-G30282, paragraph 50.

¹⁴⁷ Colin Freeze, *Khawaja trial witness recounts his radicalization*, as published in the Globe and Mail on 23 June 2008. The article is available online at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/article693605.ece>

He had also earlier sent Khyam a series of messages on the progress. Among the messages he sent to Omar Khyam on the progress were:

(December 2003) We finished designing the baby, now we just gotta put things together and test out next week or two. If all goes well I'll come down and show you the baby.¹⁴⁸

(February 2004) I just want to do a demo of it and show you how it works and stuff, its range. So we gotta find a way to get it into the UK. Maybe I can courier it over...¹⁴⁹

Momin Khawaja had also communicated to Omar Khyam the likely costs and potential range of his remote control. Back on 27 October 2003, he had emailed Khyam and told him:

okay... We can (make) the devices. The cost to make them is about four pounds each. Remote detonation. I think the range is around 2 kilometres it's small in size. We can try a few out here and let you know how things go. Also I'm looking for other things. Also bro, tell Kash to process the video.¹⁵⁰

According to the court testimony of Staff Sergeant Glenn Martindale of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Momin Khawaja had also emailed Omar Khyam again in November and tells Khyam how the device will work. Staff Sergeant Martindale's testimony reads:

In another e-mail dated November 30th, 2003 again in the Nicole_chic shara@yahoo.com.uk e-mail account j Khawaja writes to Khyam that he's starting the projects again and of showing sample pictures in the next two weeks. He explains how they have to design the whole thing that has two parts, the transmitter that sends the signal and the receiver that will be at a distance of one or two kilometres and will be attached to the wires that send five volts down the line to get the fireworks. And again throughout this conversation there's reference to five volts, 5 there's reference to the distance of one or two kilometres and there's reference to the two parts: the transmitter and the receiver.¹⁵¹

If Momin Khawaja and Omar Khyam thought they were having a good day when they met at Heathrow Airport, British police and intelligence services knew they were having a bad day. Omar Khyam and other members of his group had been under surveillance for an extended period of time. While the surveillance had enhanced their suspicious, it had provided little in the way of concrete evidence and

¹⁴⁸ Colin Freeze, *Khawaja trial witness recounts his radicalization*, as published in the Globe and Mail on 23 June 2008. The article is available online at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/article693605.ece>.

¹⁴⁹ Colin Freeze, *Khawaja trial witness recounts his radicalization*, as published in the Globe and Mail on 23 June 2008. The article is available online at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/article693605.ece>

¹⁵⁰ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, transcript page 84. The reference to the video is likely the video that was made at the training camp in Pakistan in July of 2003.

¹⁵¹ Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Bail Hearing of Momin Khawaja before the Honourable Mr. Justice Kealey, June 2005, transcript pages 84 and 85.

authorities had considered dropping the surveillance or at least cutting it back. With a long list of potential suspects and problems emerging, surveillance assets were in short supply.

All of that would change on 20 February 2004. On that day, the British authorities had three events happen within hours of each other. One was the discovery of 600 kilograms (1320 pounds) of ammonium nitrate fertilizer in a self-storage locker. The records available showed a direct connection to the Omar Khyam group. Ammonium nitrate has only two uses, both of which are well known. The first is as a fertilizer, and the second is as an explosive. Given that the amount of fertilizer was enough to cover several football pitches and that none of the members of the Khyam group had any land holdings, the worst was feared. The second key event was the discovery by the National Security Agency of an email from Pakistan to the United Kingdom. One individual, tied to Omar Khyam, was asking another on how much fuel oil should be mixed with the ammonium nitrate. Mixing fuel oil with the ammonium nitrate produces an explosive. The third event was the arrival of Momin Khawaja himself. Earlier in the morning, British surveillance teams were startled when Omar Khyam suddenly got into his vehicle and started driving west. It soon became clear that he was headed to Heathrow Airport, but no one knew why at that point. The reason would become apparent when Omar Khyam met an unknown individual just outside the arrivals area. The surveillance team could tell that the unknown new arrival was a close friend or contact of Khyam. But who was he?

While the British authorities were trying to figure who had just arrived, Omar Khyam and Momin Khawaja headed back in the general direction of Khyam's apartment. Instead of going to his apartment however, they entered an Internet café and signed onto a public computer. Watching from outside, the best the surveillance teams could confirm was that the men on the computer were looking at "something electronic." Once Momin Khawaja and Omar Khyam had left the Internet café, some quick investigational work confirmed their worst suspicions – it was an electronic device that could be used to remotely detonate a bomb.

Back at Heathrow Airport, British authorities were able to backtrack on the "new" suspect who had suddenly appeared in the investigation. He was identified as being Momin Khawaja of 672 Princess Louise Crescent of Ottawa, Ontario Canada.

In London, the surveillance efforts, that were close to having been dropped, were suddenly the highest priority investigation in all of the United Kingdom. With a few quick calls to Canada, the investigation also became a national priority in Canada. Momin Khawaja would be subjected to 24 hour a day surveillance as soon as he was back on Canadian soil. His every action and communication would be monitored and recorded.

As would become evident, the level of expertise shown by Momin Khawaja at this time was considerable. Not only was he building a transmitter-receiver for detonating the bomb, he was involved in the construction of a portable electronic jammer which would decrease the likelihood of an accidental explosion while the bomb(s) were being placed. On the opening day of the year-long trial in the United

Kingdom for Omar Khyam *et al*,¹⁵² the Crown prosecutor made an opening statement that included the name of Momin Khawaja 58 times. One of those references included an explanation of the jamming device. It was read into court as:

First of all let us deal with the jamming device-to provide extra security by preventing an inadvertent activation of the bomb. There are available some perfectly lawful commercial devices - they are used, for example, in hospitals to prevent transmission to mobiles for obvious reasons. Indeed, if we look at photograph at page 21, there is such a commercial device. Khawaja had it no doubt as part of his development of a more sophisticated and portable jamming device which could be carried by the bomber. That portable jamming device is shown at photograph page 31. At the top of the page we see a mobile phone. In fact, it's a totally false mobile phone with a false display, etc. It is a cellular jammer which would not attract any attention because it appears to be nothing more than a mobile phone.¹⁵³

The series of emails above, as well as subsequent court testimony in Canada and the United Kingdom, reveal a number of relevant issues. Firstly, it is apparent that Momin Khawaja is working for Omar Khyam and regards him as a superior in the chain of command of the small group. As well, it is evident that Momin Khawaja was committed to the development of a remote detonator and had worked on it over a period of months.

Understanding Momin Khawaja's Radicalization to Violent Action

In this section we try to understand the psychological mechanisms and motives that moved Momin Khawaja to try to join the Taliban, and to draw out some possible implications of his history for countering radicalization to violent action.

Mechanisms of Radicalization

We have reviewed sufficient detail about Momin Khawaja's pathway to terrorism that we can immediately throw out several possible interpretations of this trajectory. He is not crazy; indeed his emails and posts reveal an intelligent, thoughtful, and even charming young man. He is not seeking escape from a dead-end job or painful life situation; he is earning an upper-middle class income doing challenging work and living comfortably in his parents' home.

¹⁵² REGINA v OMAR KHYAM, ANTHONY GARCIA, NABEEL HUSSAIN, JAWAD AKBAR, WAHEED MAHMOOD, SHUJAH-UD-DIN MAHMOOD, and SALAHUDDIN AMIN.

¹⁵³ See the opening statement in the UK trial of Omar Khyam *et al*. It is available online at:

<http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=408dc2ed-d950-4ee5-a4b7-392eb5faaf34&k=75162>

The trajectory itself is perhaps the greatest problem for our analysis. Momin Khawaja was convicted on charges of attending a jihadist training camp in Pakistan, of financial contributions in support of terrorism, and of designing a radio bomb detonator for the group led by Omar Khayam in England. These are indeed extremist activities, but they are not Momin Khawaja's first commitment to violent action.

His first verbal commitment to violence was on 03 November 2001, days after the beginning of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan that followed the 9/11 attacks. Momin Khawaja took an oath of allegiance to the "Ansaar Youth Organization" through an Internet site.

Consistent with his oath, Momin Khawaja left the city of Ottawa in January 2002 with the intention of going to Afghanistan to fight with the Taliban against the U.S. invaders. This was his first physical action demonstrating his commitment to violence. On the way to Afghanistan he stopped in London for a few days and met some of the individuals he would later support with financial contributions and design of the radio detonator. But it is important to note that these individuals did not recruit him to go to fight in Afghanistan, he was already on his way to fight in Afghanistan.

Here then is the challenge: to understand how Momin Khawaja made the transition from radical opinions to radical action in January 2002.

McCauley and Moskalkenko have emphasized the importance of the gap between opinion and action.¹⁵⁴ Polls indicate that at least 50,000 U.S. and U.K. Muslims see suicide attacks on civilians as often or sometimes justified in defense of Islam, but only hundreds of U.S. and U.K. Muslims attempt terrorist actions. The gap between opinion and action is represented in Momin Khawaja's own family: his father agreed with him about Western victimization of Muslims but tried to persuade his son away from violent action. Our challenge is to understand why and how Momin Khawaja became the rare case of an individual who makes the commitment to violent action, the commitment he made in January of 2002.

Notice that this commitment was made before he had any contact with terrorists. Momin Khawaja was not recruited; he was not radicalized in the intensity of the small group dynamics that McCauley and Moskalkenko have described.¹⁵⁵ He was self-radicalized in reaction to what he read and saw of world events. It is worth a quick review to show how few of the individual-level mechanisms of radicalization identified by McCauley and Moskalkenko can be seen in Momin Khawaja's history.

Personal grievance. He and his loved ones were not victims of violence or discrimination; Momin Khawaja did not quit his job and fly to Afghanistan to seek personal revenge for a personal grievance.

¹⁵⁴ McCauley, C., & Moskalkenko, S. (2014). Toward a profile of lone wolf terrorists: What moves an individual from radical opinion to radical action? *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 26(1), 69-85.

¹⁵⁵ McCauley, C., & Moskalkenko, S. (2011). *Friction: How radicalization happens to them and us*. N.Y.: Oxford.

Group grievance. He was sensitive to what he saw as the victimization of Muslims in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Again and again his emails and posts show him moved by a group grievance, the suffering of Muslims under Western domination and repression.

Slippery Slope. He did not move through a slow escalation of activist and radical actions to end at violent action; so far as we know he was not part of any kind of political group or movement before trying to join the fighting in Afghanistan in January 2002. Still, in his practice as a Muslim he does show a slow escalation of piety and observance after he left high school, including volunteering to teach Islam to boys at the mosque. In teaching others to believe, he likely increased his own faith. In teaching others about the unity of the Ummah, he likely increased his own identification with the sufferings of the Ummah. His increasing consistency in belief and practice as a Muslim can be seen as a model and motive for increasing consistency in sympathy and action for a suffering Ummah.

Love. He did not fly to Afghanistan to join a friend, relative or romantic partner. So far as we know, he did not know any member of the Taliban before flying to Pakistan to try to get to the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Fear/Escape. He did not fly to Afghanistan to escape the police, bad debts, dangerous streets, or a dead-end job. On the contrary he gave up a good job and a comfortable life to try to join the Taliban.

Thrill and Status Seeking. Momin Khawaja has no record of thrill and adventure seeking as a means to youthful male status. He is described as quiet and calm. He describes the pressure of conscience rather than the attractions of adventure in Afghanistan.

In sum, Momin Khawaja was not moved by any kind of group dynamics and only two of the individual-level mechanisms of radicalization identified by McCauley and Moskaleiko—group grievance and slippery slope. These two mechanisms are not enough to explain how Momin Khawaja crossed the gap from opinion to action. Millions of Muslims believe that the war on terrorism is a war on Islam; millions feel the suffering of Muslims in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine; millions make the Haj or otherwise act in support of Islam in their own or other countries. The challenge of understanding Momin Khawaja's departure to fight in Afghanistan remains before us.

The Caring-Compelled Profile

Another tack is to examine what is unusual about the character or personality of Momin Khawaja. His mother says he was impulsive as a boy, including the example of piercing his own ear with a needle so that he could wear one of her earrings. Impulsivity means a small gap between motive and action; we may understand Momin Khawaja as an individual with an unusually small barrier between motive and action.

Momin Khawaja's story about facing down an abusive teacher shows something similar. The teacher was about to beat him with a stick for an invented infraction when, overcome by anger and outrage, he threatened to go home, get a bigger stick, and beat the teacher. The teacher backed down, and Momin Khawaja later drew an analogy between breaking the rule about respect for teachers and breaking the rule against violence against civilians. Sometimes injustice requires striking back. Here he again shows a small gap between feeling and action, this time in relation to a strong feeling of injustice.

As noted above, his escalation of piety can be seen as a growing consistency between belief and action. In high school he was nominally Muslim, but did little in the way of prayers and occasionally would drink alcohol with friends. In college he grew more serious and more consistent in the practice of Islam. He describes to Zeba Khan in numerous emails the demands of his conscience: Sympathizing with Muslims victimized by the West is not enough. Action consistent with his sympathies is required.

Nor is this a purely intellectual consistency. Momin Khawaja's emails, like the excerpt from his father's post, show anguished emotion in relation to the plight of Muslim victims. The difference between son and father is that the father is an academic who analyzes the plight of Muslims in abstract terms of intergroup relations and cultural conflict. The son experiences the plight of Muslims in videos of Muslim victims and Muslim warriors. We know that Momin Khawaja gave videos of this kind to Zenab Armandpisheh, encouraging her to show these "inspirational" videos to others.

We think it is a fair inference that Momin Khawaja would try to inspire others with the same materials that he found most powerful in his own transition to violent action—the kind of videos he gave to Zenab Armandpisheh, which included the infamous "Russian Hell" videos.

In another report, McCauley has argued that the power of the Internet in radicalizing to violent action is not in blogs and chatrooms but in the combination of victim videos and jihad videos.¹⁵⁶ Victim videos show Muslims suffering from Western domination, including stories of rape as well as scenes of death and disfigurement from Western munitions. Jihad videos show young Muslims planning and executing successful attacks on Western forces. The "Russian Hell" videos, for example, show a confident and close-knit group of young Muslims destroying Russian trucks and executing Russian soldiers; these videos are models of action and end with an appeal for others to join in fighting Western oppressors.

In brief we believe that videos incite emotions in ways that print and still photos cannot, and that the power of victim videos and jihad videos are the emotions they induce in viewers. Notably these emotions include anger and outrage over Western victimization of Muslims, and shame for doing less than those who are fighting back. It is their emotional power, not their information value, that gives victim and jihad videos their power. To return to the contrast between Momin Khawaja and his father, the father's anguish over Muslim victims is intellectualized and even poetic whereas the son's anguish is intensely emotional.

¹⁵⁶ Holt, T., Freilich, J.D., Chermak, S., & McCauley, C. (in press). Political radicalization on the internet: Extremist content, government control, and the power of victim and jihad videos. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*.

Momin Khawaja's commitment to violent action thus seems to have two elements: an escalating commitment to action consistent with his Muslim beliefs and an increasingly emotional identification with the suffering of Muslims under Western power. These two elements in combination make Momin Khawaja a very unusual person. He is rare in his commitment to consistency of belief and action, living almost as a monk with spiritual exercises, teaching, weight-lifting, and a frugal life style that contrasts with well-paid employment. And he is rare in his emotional response to Muslim victims and to the attractions of warrior defenders of Muslims. The measure of this attraction is his worship of Usama bin Laden as second only to the Prophet Muhammad.

It is important to notice that these two elements—escalating consistency of belief and behavior, and increasing emotional identification with the suffering of the Ummah--do not assume or assert any kind of psychopathology. He was not born to extremist violence. World events gave him a cause, a nurtured consistency of belief and behavior gave him a demanding conscience, and emotion-inciting videos pushed him to action. If he had studied in high school he could have gone to medical school and helped victim Muslims toward life rather than trying to help Muslim oppressors toward death.

Our analysis of Momin Khawaja's radicalization is related to McCauley and Moskalenko's suggestions about possible profiles of radicalization of lone-actor terrorists.¹⁵⁷ Many lone actor terrorists can be characterized as *disordered and disconnected*: loners chased by their own demons. But others have family and friends, social skills, and successful jobs. These can be characterized as *caring compelled*; they are unusual only in their capacity for sympathy and empathy that compel them to do something to help and protect the victims they feel for. Momin Khawaja appears to fit the caring-compelled profile—a lone-actor terrorist to the extent that he was self-radicalized when he tried to join the Taliban in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks.

The capacity for empathy and sympathy is generally accounted as quintessentially human, virtuous and humane. The case of Momin Khawaja alerts us to a darker side of this capacity. Individuals who feel most deeply the sufferings of others can be most likely to sacrifice themselves for others. When violence seems the only way to defend innocent victims, those who care the most may be most likely to take up violence.

If the sufferings of the Ummah are thought of as pulling Momin Khawaja to violent action, a push factor is his separation from both Canadian and Pakistani identities. As a dark-skinned immigrant whose increased Muslim piety separates him from much of Canadian culture, he cannot identify with Canadians. When Canada sends troops to Afghanistan in support of the U.S. intervention, his separation from Canada is increased. But he does not feel at home in Pakistan either; his jokes about FOBs show that the culture of his parents' homeland does not appeal to him.

¹⁵⁷ McCauley & Moskalenko, op cit 2014.

With increasing Muslim piety, decreasing attachment to Canada, and no attachment to Pakistan, Momin Khawaja is pushed to care more about the Ummah. Who is he? Not Canadian, not Pakistani, but Muslim. His religious identity becomes his political identity. The Ummah becomes his nation and the suffering of the Ummah becomes his political cause. As noted earlier, second generation immigrants may be over-represented among home-grown Muslim terrorists in Western countries. If so, the radicalization of Momin Khawaja suggests that it is the push from failed national identities as well as the pull of Ummah suffering that moves second-generation Muslim immigrants toward violent action.

Implications for Counterterrorism

In the years since Khawaja's arrest, the United States has dramatically reduced its military presence in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Osama bin Laden, whom Khawaja admired so much, has been found and executed by the United States, and al-Qa'ida is no longer the threat it once was. However, the new global terrorist threat represented by Islamic State utilizes precisely the tools that worked so well to radicalize Khawaja: internet videos that inspire jihad and do-it-yourself manuals for carrying out that jihad. Western countries are concerned now about foreign fighters volunteering for Islamic State from the safety of their Western homes. Momin Khawaja was an early example of attempted foreign fighter; what can his case teach us about today's foreign fighters? If our analysis of Momin Khawaja's radicalization is correct, what are the implications for preventing this kind of radicalization?

There are at least three lessons to be taken from the case study presented in this report. First is the importance of distinguishing extreme ideas from extreme actions. Second is the importance of internet video propaganda. Third is the possibility of identifying individuals who fit the same profile of lone-actor terrorist as Khawaja: caring-compelled.

Ideas versus actions. The importance of distinguishing extreme ideas from extremes of action is captured in the comparison of Momin Khawaja with his father, Dr. Mahboob Khawaja. Father and son agreed that Muslims are suffering from Western power but Dr. Khawaja counseled his son against emotional reaction to the suffering of the Ummah and suggested instead activist organizing to help the Ummah. Nor was his father the only one who saw Muslims suffering. Quoted above at footnote 96, Momin Khawaja writes that

Everyone supports the Palestinian cause, are against the Iraqi occupation, are against the Afghani occupation. ... Yes, i'm emotional about the state of the Muslim Ummah. While I want action, others are content with only slogans :(

Of course "everyone" here means Muslims, but polls confirm the idea that most Muslims see the war on terrorism as a war on Islam.

The implication for countering violent extremism is that CVE should not try to target extreme ideas. The extremism to be targeted is extreme action, especially violent action. Trying to change opinions about the war on terrorism will run afoul of the free speech protections, at least in the United States. Targeting extreme opinions will unnecessarily multiply the enemy, because, as Momin Khawaja bemoaned, extreme ideas are common but action based on these ideas is rare. Targeting extreme ideas is most likely to push a few with extreme ideas toward the action they have so far avoided.

The importance of victim and jihad videos. Perhaps the most practical possibility would be to suppress or counter the victim and jihad videos that we have argued are the emotional power that pushes sympathy toward action. For this purpose, it would be useful to know more about Islamic State propaganda videos, specifically what makes them compelling and affecting. A useful research direction would be to track individual views and reposts to compare especially popular (“viral”) jihadist videos with less popular ones, trying to determine what characteristics make some videos more powerful. These data can then be used to identify potentially damaging videos and stop their promulgation before they can spread over the internet.

Another possibility, one that has been employed with some success by the Russian government in their conflict with Ukraine¹⁵⁸, is to “dilute the market” of Internet postings with those opposing the jihadist rhetoric. Reportedly, hundreds of individuals are employed by the Russian government to “troll” for postings that oppose the Kremlin’s policies and criticize Russia’s actions. These employees post opinion pieces, doctored photos and videos, as well as posting comments that contradict anti-government posts. The Internet segment devoted to the Russia-Ukraine conflict is therefore flooded with pro-Russia positions, creating a false consensus that supports the Russian government. Of course many governments around the world pay for pro-government internet posts, including U.S.A. China, Israel, and Turkey¹⁵⁹

Identifying the caring-compelled. Rather than prevention, the counterterrorism goal might be prediction. The caring-compelled profile suggests attention to the few among those who justify terrorist violence who have a history of actions caring for others, trying to help others, strong emotional reactions to the suffering of others, and access to emotional representations of the suffering of others. These individuals are rare: finding reasons for what we do is easy, but doing what we find reason for is more difficult. Especially when our ideas point to the need for costly and risky action, rationalization of doing nothing is easier than paying the price of action.

What’s more, of the few individuals who marry opinion and action, even fewer do so for the reasons that Khawaja did: selflessly empathizing with the suffering of others. Terrorism is rare. Lone-actor terrorists

¹⁵⁸ Pomerantsev (2015). Inside the Kremlin hall of mirrors. The Guardian, April 9 2015. Available at <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2015/apr/09/kremlin-hall-of-mirrors-military-information-psychology>

¹⁵⁹ McCauley, T. (2015). The war of ideas on the Internet: An asymmetric conflict in which the strong become weak. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 8(1), 79-90.

are a small subset of all terrorists, and caring-compelled lone-actor terrorists are rarest of all. Finding this needle in a haystack may not be feasible. However, as mentioned above, if someone like Khawaja were given a chance to use his sympathies for good instead of evil, for example by becoming a physician tending to Muslim victims of international conflicts, he may have avoided getting involved in terrorism.

A careful suggestion we wish to make here is that the rare personality that led Khawaja to terrorism might have led him to great deeds under different circumstances. The power of rare individuals determined to act on their beliefs can be a cultural resource if we learn to identify and direct it. Schools routinely test children for academic ability, channeling them into classes that can help make the best of their potential. Similarly it might be possible in high school years to assess individual propensity to act on beliefs and feelings about helping others. Individuals identified as high on this propensity might benefit from career counseling that emphasizes self-sacrifice, including professions such as medicine, teaching, fire-fighting, police, and the military. The caring-compelled profile can lead to violent action, as it did Khawaja. Under different circumstances, however, it can lead to actions that advance both the individual and society.

Appendix 1. Timeline of political and personal events in the radicalization of Momin Khawaja

Date	Personal	Political
09/1945		India and Pakistan declare independence from the British Empire. Prolonged conflict that ensued affected generations of Muslims including Khawaja’s parents.
04/19/1979	Momin Khawaja is born in Ottawa, Canada	
04/1979		Iranian Revolution
12/1979		Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan
12/1979		Saudi Arabia’s main Mosque in Mecca seized by ‘mahdi’
1980	Mother moves to Pakistan with her three children, including Khawaja; father stays to pursue studies at Syracuse University	
1984	Family reunites in Toronto	
1984-1986	Family lives in Lybia	
1986	Khawaja (7y.o.) remembered the strikes	U.S. bombs Libya attempting to kill Khaddafi
1986-1988	Family lives in Pakistan	
1988-1993	Family lives in Saudi Arabia	
1993	Family moves to Ottawa, Canada	
1996-1997	Khawaja begins to spend time with “Pakistanis with Attitude” group at his High School	
05/1998	Khawaja graduates high school	
09/1998	begins studying software development at Algonquin College	
05/12/1999	opens a Yahoo email account using real personal information	
2000	begins frequenting Bilal Mosque and volunteering there teaching Islam to boys ages 5-15.	

09/2000	Time of reflection about Muslim world's suffering, reconsideration of his own role in the Muslim struggle	Second Palestinian Intifada
9/11/2001		9/11 attacks against the U.S.A.
10/07/2001	Views of the Ummah being under oppression and attack "gave direction to [his] life,"	U.S. invasion of Afghanistan
11/03/2001	Took an oath of allegiance to the "Ansaar Youth Organization" through an Internet site	
12/10/2001	Leaves job after 5 wks of employment to "seek other employment overseas."	
01/2002	Begins a trip to Pakistan aiming to join the Taliban in Afghanistan to fight against the U.S. and allies, with a layover in London where he meets Omar Khyam and Abdul Haleem	
03/2002	Return from Pakistan to Canada	
06/2002	Employed as software developer at Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs	
09/2002	Connects with Zenab Armandpisheh on the Internet to help carry out financial transactions to aid "brothers"	
01/2003	Zenab opens a bank account and gives a debit card to Khawaja who sends it to London to Khyam	
03/2003		U.S. and allies invade Iraq
10/24/2003	Posts a blog entry recounting his threatening an unfair teacher at an Islamic school he attended at age 5	
07/2003	Travels to Pakistan to a terrorist training camp	

02/20/2004	Travels to London to discuss his radio bomb detonator with Omar Khyam and Abdul Haleem	
03/29/2004	Arrested in Canada and charged with terrorism	