

Jihadist Networks in Europe: Implications for the United States

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Abstract

Islamist extremism has emerged as one of the central threats to Europe's security and social cohesion. Europe is home to the world's largest Muslim diaspora and is a central arena in the global battle over Muslim identity. This struggle has also become central to Europe's own crisis of identity. Although the vast majority of Muslims in Europe are not involved in radical activities, Islamist extremists and vocal fringe communities advocate terrorism openly, are active recruiters and funders for terrorist activities, and have provided cover for terrorist cells. Germany and Spain, for instance, were key logistical and planning bases for the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. The rise of Islamic extremism in Europe poses important security considerations for the U.S. in the fight against international terrorism. How European governments and societies deal with the challenge will be an important determinant of the sort of partner Europe will be for the U.S. in coming years.