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Contents

About the CTC Sentinel

The Combating Terrorism Center is an independent educational and research institution based in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy, West Point. The CTC Sentinel harnesses the Center's global network of scholars and practitioners to understand and confront contemporary threats posed by terrorism and other forms of political violence.

The Terrorist Threat to Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons

By Shaun Gregory

Pakistani Army soldiers guarding nuclear-capable missiles. - Photo by Rizwan Tabassum/AFP/Getty Images

Al-Qa`ida has made numerous statements about a desire to obtain nuclear weapons for use against the United States and Western interests.[1] While many of these statements are rhetorical hyperbole, the scale of the potential destructiveness of nuclear weapons, the instability and "nuclear porosity" of the context in Pakistan, and the vulnerabilities within Pakistan's nuclear safety and security arrangements mean that the risks of terrorist groups gaining access to nuclear materials are real. Moreover, militants have recently attacked a number of Pakistan's nuclear facilities, including an August 21, 2008 incident at the Wah cantonment, widely understood to be one of Pakistan's main nuclear weapons assembly sites.

In an effort to provide insight on the scale of the threat, this article will first outline Pakistan's current nuclear safeguards, and then identify a series of weaknesses in the country's nuclear security that could result in terrorist groups such as al-Qa`ida or the Pakistani Taliban gaining access to sensitive nuclear material.

Pakistan's Nuclear Safeguards

Pakistan has established a robust set of measures to assure the security of its nuclear weapons. These have been based on copying U.S. practices, procedures and technologies, and comprise: a) physical security; b) personnel reliability programs; c) technical and procedural safeguards; and d) deception and secrecy. These measures provide the Pakistan Army's Strategic Plans Division (SPD)—which oversees nuclear weapons operations—a high degree of confidence in the safety and security of the country's nuclear weapons.[2]

1 "Bin Laden has Nuclear Weapons," BBC, November 10, 2001; "Al Qa'ida Threaten to Use Pakistani Nukes," *Independent*, June 22, 2009.

2 Lt. Col. Zafar Ali (SPD), *Pakistan's Nuclear Assets and Threats of Terrorism: How Grave is the Danger?* (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2007).

In terms of physical security, Pakistan operates a layered concept of concentric tiers of armed forces personnel to guard nuclear weapons facilities, the use of physical barriers and intrusion detectors to secure nuclear weapons facilities, the physical separation of warhead cores from their detonation components, and the storage of the components in protected underground sites.

With respect to personnel reliability, the Pakistan Army conducts a tight selection process drawing almost exclusively on officers from Punjab Province who are considered to have fewer links with religious extremism or with the Pashtun areas of Pakistan from which groups such as the Pakistani Taliban mainly garner their support. Pakistan operates an analog to the U.S. Personnel Reliability Program (PRP) that screens individuals for Islamist sympathies, personality problems, drug use, inappropriate external affiliations, and sexual deviancy.[3] The army uses staff rotation and also operates a "two-person" rule under which no action, decision, or activity involving a nuclear weapon can be undertaken by fewer than two persons.[4] The purpose of this policy is to reduce the risk of collusion with terrorists and to prevent nuclear weapons technology getting transferred to the black market. In total, between 8,000 and 10,000 individuals from the SPD's security division and from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), Military Intelligence and Intelligence Bureau agencies are involved in the security clearance and monitoring of those with nuclear weapons duties.[5]

Despite formal command authority structures that cede a role to Pakistan's civilian leadership, in practice the Pakistan Army has complete control over the country's nuclear weapons. It imposes its executive authority over the weapons through the use of an authenticating code system down through the command chains that is intended to ensure that only authorized nuclear weapons activities and operations occur. It operates a tightly controlled identification system to assure the identity of those involved in the nuclear chain of command, and it also uses a rudimentary Permissive Action Link (PAL) type system to electronically lock its nuclear weapons. This system uses technology similar to the banking industry's "chip and pin" to ensure that even if weapons fall into terrorist hands they cannot be detonated.[6]

Finally, Pakistan makes extensive use of secrecy and deception. Significant elements of Pakistan's nuclear weapons infrastructure are kept a closely guarded secret. This includes the precise location of some of the storage facilities for nuclear core and detonation components, the location of preconfigured nuclear weapons crisis deployment sites, aspects of the nuclear command and control arrangements,[7] and many aspects of the arrangements for nuclear safety and security (such as the numbers of those removed under personnel reliability programs, the reasons for their removal, and how often authenticating and enabling (PAL-type) codes are changed). In addition, Pakistan uses deception—such as dummy missiles—to complicate the calculus of adversaries and is likely to have extended this practice to its nuclear weapons infrastructure.

"The concern, however, is that most of Pakistan's nuclear sites are close to or even within areas dominated by Pakistani Taliban militants and home to al-Qa`ida."

Taken together, these measures provide confidence that the Pakistan Army can fully protect its nuclear weapons against the internal terrorist threat,[8] against its main adversary India, and against the suggestion that its nuclear weapons could be either spirited out of the country by a third party (posited to be the United States) or destroyed in the event of a deteriorating situation or a state collapse in Pakistan.[9] The fact that Pakistan has been willing to fire on U.S. soldiers during the latter's ground incursion into Pakistan's tribal areas on September 12, 2008[10] removes any debate about whether Pakistan would use force to resist attempts by the United States to secure Pakistan's nuclear assets without its consent. Similarly, the use of U.S. precision strikes to destroy the weapons would need to rely on perfect intelligence and would risk not only significant radiological hazards at strike targets, but also the ire of the Pakistan Army and the wider Islamic world.

Despite these elaborate safeguards, empirical evidence points to a clear set of weaknesses and vulnerabilities in Pakistan's nuclear safety and security arrangements.

Pakistan's Nuclear Security Weaknesses

When Pakistan was developing its nuclear weapons infrastructure in the 1970s and 1980s, its principal concern was the risk that India would overrun its nuclear weapons facilities in an armored offensive if the facilities were placed close to the long Pakistan-India border. As a result, Pakistan, with a few exceptions, chose to locate much of its nuclear weapons infrastructure to the north and west of the country and to the region around Islamabad and Rawalpindi—sites such as Wah, Fatehjang, Golra Sharif, Kahuta, Sihala, Isa Khel Charma, Tarwanah, and Taxila.[11] The concern, however, is that most of Pakistan's nuclear sites are close to or even within areas dominated by Pakistani Taliban militants and home to al-Qa`ida.

The Pakistani Taliban and al-Qa`ida are more than capable of launching terrorist attacks in these areas, including within Islamabad and Rawalpindi. They

3 Shaun Gregory, "Nuclear Command and Control in Pakistan," *Defense and Security Analysis* 23:3 (2007).

4 Cotta-Ramusino and Maurizio Martelline, *Nuclear Safety, Nuclear Stability and Nuclear Strategy in Pakistan* (Como, Italy: Landau Network, 2002).

5 Personal interview, General Kidwai, Director General of the SPD, Islamabad, March 2005; Personal interview, Bruno Tertrais, French Ministry of Defense, June 2007.

6 David Blair, "Code Changes 'Secure' Pakistan Warheads," *Daily Telegraph*, February 9, 2004.

7 This includes the issue of pre-delegation during crises.

8 "Zardari Says Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons are Safe," Reuters, April 27, 2009.

9 "US Has Plans to Secure Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons," *Daily Times*, May 16, 2009.

10 "Shots Fired in US-Pakistan Clash," BBC, September 25, 2008.

11 "Expansion at Pakistan's Nuclear Sites," Institute for Science and International Security, May 19, 2009.

have also proved that they have good intelligence about the movement of security personnel, including army, ISI and police forces, all of whom have been routinely targeted. A series of attacks on nuclear weapons facilities has also occurred. These have included an attack on the nuclear missile storage facility at Sargodha on November 1, 2007,[12] an attack on Pakistan's nuclear airbase at Kamra by a suicide bomber on December 10, 2007,[13] and perhaps most significantly the August 21, 2008 attack when Pakistani Taliban suicide bombers blew up several entry points to one of the armament complexes at the Wah cantonment, considered one of Pakistan's main nuclear weapons assembly sites.[14]

"The attacks at the Wah cantonment highlight the vulnerability of nuclear weapons infrastructure sites to at least three forms of terrorist assault."

The significance of these events is difficult to overstate. Civilian nuclear weapons sites—those sites where Pakistan's nuclear weapons are manufactured, assembled or taken for refurbishment—are typically less protected than military sites where nuclear weapons are stored, deployed and operated, a problem the Pakistan Army has now moved to address.[15] The attacks at the Wah cantonment highlight the vulnerability of nuclear weapons infrastructure sites to at least three forms of terrorist assault: a) an attack to cause a fire at a nuclear weapons facility, which would create a radiological hazard; b) an attack to cause an explosion at a nuclear weapons facility involving a nuclear weapon or components, which would create a radiological hazard; or c) an attack with the objective of seizing control of nuclear weapons components or possibly a nuclear weapon. On the latter point, Pakistan's usual separation of nuclear weapons components is compromised to a degree by the need to assemble weapons at certain points in the manufacture and refurbishment cycle at civilian sites, and by the requirement for co-location of the separate components at military sites so that they can be mated quickly if necessary in crises. Furthermore, the emergence of new terrorist tactics in Pakistan (and of Pakistani terrorists in India) in which groups of armed combatants act in coordination on the ground[16]—sometimes in combination with suicide or vehicle bomb attacks at entry points to facilitate access—suggests the credibility of such an assault on a nuclear weapons facility; this is especially true because in a number of these attacks the security has been poor and disorganized, and the terrorists have been able to escape and remain at large.

The risk of the Pakistani Taliban or al-Qa`ida gaining access to nuclear weapons, components or technical knowledge takes on an even graver dimension once the possibility of collusion is introduced. It is widely accepted that there is a strong element within the Pakistan Army and within the lead intelligence agency, the ISI, that is anti-Western, particularly anti-U.S., and that there also exists an overlapping pro-Islamist strand.[17] This is attributed to the "Islamization" of the Pakistan Army, which is the result of a number of factors: General Zia-ul-Haq opening the doors of the Pakistan Army to Islamists in the late 1970s;[18] family and clan links to Islamists and extremists; the corrosive impact of what is widely seen as the Pakistan Army being asked to turn their guns on their own countrymen at Washington's behest; and the corruption of pro-Western political and military leaders.

No screening program will ever be able to weed out all Islamist sympathizers or anti-Westerners among Pakistan's military or among civilians with nuclear weapons expertise. Yet, there are at least four levels of concern about collusion.

First, those with access to nuclear weapons facilities, but not to the weapons or components themselves, could facilitate the access of terrorist groups to nuclear weapons sites, acting as a significant force multiplier for the kind of terrorist attack seen at Wah in August 2008.

"It remains imperative that Pakistan is pressured and supported, above all by the United States, to continue to improve the safety and security of its nuclear weapons and to ensure the fidelity of those civilian and military personnel with access to, or knowledge of, nuclear weapons."

Second, some individuals with nuclear weapons duties could facilitate—through intelligence, or directly—access to nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons components, circumventing two-person and other procedural obstacles.

Third, technocrats with pro-terrorist or anti-Western sympathies could transfer their knowledge to al-Qa`ida or to the Pakistani Taliban. There is already the well-known case of two senior Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) scientists, Sultan Bashirrudin

12 Bill Roggio, "Suicide Bomber Kills Eight at Pakistani Airbase," The Long War Journal, November 1, 2007.

13 Bill Roggio, "Al Qaeda, Taliban Targeting Pakistani Nuclear Sites," The Long War Journal, December 11, 2007.

14 "Pakistan Bombers Hit Arms Factory," BBC, August 21, 2008.

15 The Pakistan Army has strengthened the security at some civilian sites by the deployment of extra troops and through the training of police and civilian nuclear security personnel. These measures, however, have not been widely implemented due to the immense pressure on Pakistan's security forces because of the operations in the Pashtun belt and to manpower problems partly due to terrorist attacks on Pakistan's security forces.

16 "Pakistan Taliban Chief Brags of Attack on Police," *Washington Post*, April 1, 2009.

17 This has many expressions, including the unwillingness of Pakistani soldiers to fight in the tribal areas, the involvement of Pakistan Army officers in protecting alleged 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaykh Muhammad while he was on the run between September 2002 and February 2003, and the involvement of Pakistani officers in assassination attempts against Pakistan's nominally pro-Western president, General Pervez Musharraf.

18 Hassan Abbas, *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Press, 2005).

Mahmood and Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, who traveled to Afghanistan in 2000 and again shortly before 9/11 for meetings with Usama bin Ladin himself, the content of which has never been disclosed.[19] Combined with the example of AQ Khan, the so-called "father" of Pakistan's nuclear bomb who was arrested in 2004 for masterminding the largest nuclear proliferation network in history, the cases of Mahmood and Majeed point to what has been termed the "porosity" of the nuclear context in Pakistan and the real risk of nuclear technology and of related technology being sold to terrorists on the black market by those involved with Khan or with Pakistan's nuclear weapons program.[20]

The final risk, and one that is usually overlooked, is that the Pakistan Army could itself decide to transfer nuclear weapons to a terrorist group. One argument for this, described in Philip Bobbitt's *Terror and Consent*,[21] is that states can become pressurized or incentivized to transfer nuclear weapons to terrorist groups because they are responding to threats from an external power but fear the consequences of being identified as the origin of a nuclear strike. In the context of severe international pressure on the Pakistan Army—particularly by India or the United States[22]—the risk exists that Pakistan might be similarly incentivized to move to such a "coercive option." This remains extremely unlikely in the present context, not least given the level of terrorist threat to the Pakistani state itself. Nevertheless, it forms a necessary strand of the calculus about the transfer of nuclear weapons to terrorist groups in Pakistan.[23]

Conclusion

The risk of the transfer of nuclear weapons, weapons components or nuclear expertise to terrorists in Pakistan is genuine. Moreover, knowledge that such a transfer has occurred may not become evident until the aftermath of a nuclear 9/11 in Pakistan or elsewhere in the world. It remains imperative that Pakistan is pressured and supported, above all by the United States, to continue to improve the safety and security of its nuclear weapons and to ensure the fidelity of those civilian and military personnel with access to, or knowledge of, nuclear weapons. The challenge to Pakistan's nuclear weapons from Pakistani Taliban groups and from al-Qa`ida constitutes a real and present danger, and the recent assaults by the Pakistan Army on some of these groups in FATA and in the NWFP is a welcome development. Nevertheless, more steps must be taken before the threat is neutralized and Pakistan's nuclear weapons no longer pose an existential danger to the rest of the world.

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19 Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins, *Nuclear Jihadist: The Man Who Sold the World's Most Dangerous Weapons* (New York: Twelve, 2007).

20 Adrian Levy and Katherine Scott-Clarke, *Deception: Pakistan, the United States and the Secret Trade in Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Walker and Company, 2007).

21 Philip Bobbitt, *Terror and Consent* (London: Allen Lane, 2008).

22 For example, in a context in which the United States was attempting to "take out" Pakistani nuclear weapons by precision airstrikes or by the insertion of special forces teams.

23 It is an interesting aside that Pakistan Army Chief of Staff Mirza Aslam Beg was instrumental in passing nuclear weapons technology to a regional and sectarian rival, Iran, in the 1980s simply for money for the Pakistan Army. The lesson is clear: under certain circumstances, senior figures in the Pakistan Army may be willing to transfer nuclear weapons technology, even when it is irrational to do so as in the case of Iran, empowering a regional and religious rival.

The Significance of Qari Zain's Assassination in Pakistan

By Rahimullah Yusufzai

ON JUNE 23, 2009, prominent tribal militant commander Qari Zainuddin Mehsud was assassinated, reportedly on the orders of Tehrik-i-Taliban (TTP) leader Baitullah Mehsud.[1] His death came only a week after formally announcing a rebellion against Baitullah and his militia in primetime interviews on a number of independent television stations in Pakistan. The assassination of the 29-year-old commander, commonly known as Qari Zain, occurred in the southern city of Dera Ismail Khan in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), not far from the Mehsud tribe's native South Waziristan tribal agency bordering Afghanistan.

Qari Zain's death demonstrates that Baitullah Mehsud will attempt to eliminate any tribal leader that challenges his authority. It also deals a significant setback to the Pakistani government, which was reportedly providing Qari Zain with funds and weapons to combat Baitullah Mehsud and his TTP forces. This article will discuss the significance of Qari Zain's assassination, explain why the Qari Zain and Baitullah Mehsud factions have been at war with one another, identify Qari Zain's successor, and briefly outline Pakistan's three-pronged strategy for moving forward.

The Assassination

On June 23, Qari Zain was shot to death by Gulbuddin Mehsud, one of his trusted guards. The guard also injured Qari Zain's aide, Baz Mohammad, before escaping. The assassin was once loyal to Baitullah Mehsud, but opted to join the pro-government splinter group named after Qari Zain's slain cousin, Abdullah Mehsud. According to Baz Mohammad, the assailant rejoined Qari Zain's forces after accepting the group's general amnesty that was offered to fighters willing to abandon Baitullah's militia.[2] As expected, the TTP claimed

1 M. Irfan Mughal, "Baitullah Rival Shot Dead," *Dawn*, June 24, 2009.

2 Qayum Nawaz Babar, "Baitullah Turns Tables on Govt," *The News International*, June 24, 2009.

responsibility for the assassination. Waliur Rahman, a deputy to Baitullah, and leading TTP commander Hakimullah Mehsud phoned reporters to claim that they had plotted Qari Zain's murder on Baitullah's orders after he turned against their group. Waliur Rahman described Qari Zain as a miscreant and warned that "anyone who works against us will face the same fate."[3]

By ordering Qari Zain's killing, Baitullah has demonstrated that he will not tolerate any opponent, particularly one from his own tribe and with links to Pakistan's security forces. The killing was similar to the 2008 assassination of Haji Namdar, the leader of the non-Taliban Islamic militant group Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkar (Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice) operating in Bara area of Khyber Agency. He too was killed by one of his guards, who later confessed that he was tasked by Baitullah's close aide Hakimullah Mehsud to kill Namdar.[4] In Namdar's case, Baitullah decided to kill him after he stopped supporting the Taliban and began working with Pakistani authorities by expelling TTP militants from his area of control. Rivals have also accused Baitullah of sponsoring the murder of around 283 tribal elders in his native South Waziristan.[5] Qari Zain's assassination reinforced Baitullah's reputation as the most powerful and dangerous Pakistani Taliban commander.

Most importantly, the assassination was a setback for Pakistan's government and military, which were reportedly supporting him and his ally, Turkistan Bhittani, against Baitullah's faction. Although Pakistan Army spokesman Major General Athar Abbas maintained that the military had not helped any of the anti-Baitullah Taliban forces, he conceded that the government might be engaging with them at a political level.[6] Evidence that the government and the army was helping Qari Zain's group became obvious when a military helicopter flew his body to Abbottabad, where his displaced family, including his wife, had moved to escape Baitullah's reach.[7] The body was kept overnight at the Combined Military Hospital in Abbottabad before being flown to Dera Ismail Khan for burial held under the supervision of security forces.[8] A spokesman for the Qari Zain group also admitted that they had received modest government funding in the shape of a religious donation, or *zakat*.[9]

History of Qari Zain's Split from Baitullah

Qari Zain split from Baitullah Mehsud's group after the death of his cousin Abdullah Mehsud in 2007. Abdullah was a Pakistani Taliban commander and one of the most wanted militants during the rule of General Pervez Musharraf. Before becoming a leading Pakistani Taliban commander, Abdullah was captured by U.S. forces in Afghanistan in December 2001 and later transferred to the U.S. detention facility at Guantanamo Bay along with other al-Qa`ida and Taliban commanders. After spending 25 months at Guantanamo Bay, he was released in March 2004 due to insufficient evidence that he belonged to al-Qa`ida or that he was a top Taliban commander.[10] Upon his return home, he became an instant hero, gave speeches preaching jihad and assembled a band of fighters. He was under the command of Baitullah Mehsud, however, who at the time was almost unknown and preferred to work in the background unlike the younger Abdullah.[11] It was Abdullah's death on July 24, 2007—when he blew himself up following a shootout with Pakistan's security forces in Zhob in Baluchistan—that sparked the fierce rivalry between his family and Baitullah Mehsud.[12]

"Qari Zain's assassination reinforced Baitullah's reputation as the most powerful and dangerous Pakistani Taliban commander."

Qari Zain and his family accused Baitullah of involvement in Abdullah's murder.[13] Qari Zain also suspected Baitullah's hand in the murder of his father, Masoodur Rahman Mehsud, and one of Abdullah's successors, Saifullah Mehsud.[14] To avenge these losses, Qari Zain tried for almost two years to rally the Mehsud tribe and Taliban fighters against Baitullah without much success. He began gaining strength in the spring of 2009 when Pakistan's government and its intelligence agencies supported him and another dissident Pakistani Taliban commander, Turkistan Bhittani, to weaken Baitullah's faction. With Qari Zain's death, this strategy has backfired, at least for the time being.

Mantle Passed to Misbahuddin Mehsud

Qari Zain's brother, Misbahuddin Mehsud, who is known by the alias Toofan Mehsud, replaced him as the commander of the Abdullah Mehsud group.[15] He is expected to continue the vendetta against Baitullah in what has become a blood feud. Pledging to avenge his brother's murder, Misbahuddin said he would not rest until Baitullah was dead. Like his slain brother, he supports the ongoing military operation in South Waziristan and said that those killed or apprehended in the fighting are Baitullah's men and that all of them are terrorists. As was the case with Qari Zain, Misbahuddin said he would continue to assist the "jihad" in Afghanistan against U.S.-led coalition forces and announced support for Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar.[16] It appears that at this point supporting Misbahuddin is the government's primary option to weaken and defeat Baitullah.

3 "TTP Claims Qari Zainuddin's Killing," Agence France-Presse, June 25, 2009.

4 "Tense Calm in Bara After Namdar Killing," *The News International*, August 15, 2008.

5 "Baitullah Mehsud Getting Tough Competition from Tribal Rival," Asian News International (ANI), May 11, 2009

6 Kathy Gannon, "Assassination in Pakistan Exposes Taliban Rifts," Associated Press, June 23, 2009.

7 "Baitullah Mehsud's Rival Commander Qari Zainuddin Killed," *Daily Aaj* [Peshawar], June 24, 2009.

8 Syed Shoaib Hasan, "A Very Strange Taliban Burial," BBC, June 25, 2009.

9 Sabrina Tavernise and Pir Zubair Shah, "Pakistan to Strike at Leader of Taliban," *New York Times*, June 15, 2009.

10 "Profile: Abdullah Mehsud," BBC, July 24, 2007. Also see, Rahimullah Yusufzai, "A Daredevil Militant with an Artificial Leg," *The News International*, October 12, 2004.

11 Personal interviews, Abdullah Mehsud and Baitullah Mehsud, South Waziristan Agency, October 9, 2004.

12 Salim Shahid, "Cornered Militant Blows Himself Up," *Dawn*, July 25, 2007.

13 Omar Waraich, "Pakistan Slaying Reveals a Flawed Strategy," *Time Magazine*, June 25, 2009.

14 Ibid.

15 Iqbal Khattak, "Qari Zainuddin Killed, Baitullah Accused," *Daily Times*, June 24, 2009.

16 Hasan.

The government hopes that Misbahuddin will mobilize his slain brother's followers. In an interview, Maulana Mohammad Luqman, a cleric from South Waziristan, estimated that Qari Zain's group had about 700 fighters.[17] Other sources said the group could call 500 to 1,000 armed men. Qari Zain and his commanders used to claim that they had 3,000 fighters and that their strength was growing. In fact, the group had hunted down Baitullah's men in Tank and Dera Ismail Khan districts, capturing a number of them allegedly with the help of Pakistan's intelligence agencies. Yet the Qari Zain group does not have any presence in South Waziristan, from where it was forced out by the stronger Baitullah Mehsud group. Qari Zain himself had to first shift from his village in Barwand in South Waziristan to the Shakai area of the agency to take refuge with an anti-Baitullah faction. Later, he took up residence in Jandola under the protection of his ally, Turkistan Bhittani. Finally, he moved to Dera Ismail Khan city in the NWFP to set up his organization with assistance from the government.

Presently, Baitullah appears well-entrenched on account of his army of committed fighters not only in South Waziristan, but also in other tribal areas in FATA and districts in the NWFP. As the founder and head of the TTP, he commands several thousand fighters in the province and also like-minded allies in the rest of Pakistan, particularly in Punjab. His fighting strength could be in the range of 10,000 or more.[18] Although some of his men had previously defected to Qari Zain's group, this rate may slow in light of Qari Zain's death.[19] Moreover, Qari Zain's assassination has created fear among Mehsud tribesmen, and they may be less willing to rise against Baitullah even though they see him as responsible for the increase in U.S. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) strikes and Pakistani military operations in their villages.[20]

Pakistan's Three-Stage Strategy to Weaken Baitullah

Pakistan is now pursuing a three-stage military strategy to weaken Baitullah's militia. The first part of the strategy began in June 2009. It involves bombing and shelling Baitullah's positions to soften his fighters before sending ground forces to occupy his strongholds and block supplies. The government is rumored to have sought U.S. help in targeting Baitullah's militia with UAV attacks, and a number of these attacks have occurred in the area recently. The Pakistan Army is releasing daily reports about the bombing campaign, although there is no independent confirmation about its claims.

The second segment of the strategy is to neutralize Pakistani Taliban commanders such as Maulvi Nazir in the Wana area in South Waziristan and Hafiz Gul Bahadur in North Waziristan. The government is arranging and extending truces and peace accords with these leaders to prevent them from joining Baitullah Mehsud. Thus far, this goal has not yet materialized; in fact, both commanders have scrapped their peace deals with the government after accusing it of violating the accord's terms. Their main complaint is that the Pakistan government was cooperating with the United States in carrying out UAV attacks in both North and South Waziristan. They have made it clear that they will not revive the peace accords until an end to UAV strikes.[21] Moreover, Hafiz Gul Bahadur has made an additional demand for the Pakistani military to end the military operation against Baitullah Mehsud.

The third element of the government's strategy is to create further divisions in the TTP and strengthen the splinter group led by all those opposed to Baitullah's faction. This effort is continuing even after the assassination of Qari Zain.

Conclusion

It will take time to revitalize Qari Zain's group under the command of Misbahuddin Mehsud. Some of his men are demoralized, while others want more government support. Nevertheless, it is now also a matter of honor for Qari Zain's men because they will want to avenge all those who were killed at the hands of Baitullah. The government will likely need to provide more support to Qari Zain's men to defeat Baitullah's forces. An initial government plan was to initiate a ground offensive to secure territory from Baitullah's men in South Waziristan, and then to deploy Qari Zain's fighters to the secured areas to prevent the militia from returning. This plan is still in place even though it may not materialize in the timeframe that was originally anticipated.

As of July 20, the ground operation has not yet started. There are reports that the government is making frantic efforts to rally the tribes in both North and South Waziristan to its side in a bid to neutralize militant commanders Maulvi Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadur. Further complicating the matter, on July 11 the government instructed anti-Baitullah commander Turkistan Bhittani to close down his group's office in Tank city.[22] The step may have been taken due to criticism that the government was erring by strengthening new militant commanders who would be difficult to control in the future. Nevertheless, there is no clear indication yet that the government and the military have discarded the option of organizing and strengthening groups of militants willing to challenge the power of Baitullah Mehsud and his allies.

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17 Personal correspondence, Maulana Mohammad Luqman, July 1, 2009.

18 Kathy Gannon, "Assassination in Pakistan Exposes Taliban Rifts," Associated Press, June 23, 2009.

19 Defections from Baitullah's group occurred mainly in the settled districts of Tank and Dera Ismail Khan, where the government had the means to help Qari Zain's men lure and frighten Mehsud tribesmen to switch sides. No precise figures are available, although Qari Zain claimed in his interviews before his assassination that his group was now dominant in Tank and Dera Ismail Khan.

20 Tahir Ali, "Govt-Backed Revolts Against TTP Fail to Deliver," *Pulse* [Islamabad], July 3-9, 2009.

21 "US Drones Throw Cold Water on Pak Plans," *Pulse*, July 3-9, 2009.

22 "Pro-Govt Militant Commander Turkestani Bhittani Instructed to Close Office in Tank," Express TV, July 11, 2009.

Pakistan's New Offensive in South Waziristan

By Samir Syed

IN APRIL 2009, the Pakistani military launched a major operation against Taliban militants in the Malakand region of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). The operation was considered a success, and the military claims that the entire Swat Valley has been cleared of militants. In the wake of the offensive, the Pakistan Army is now mobilizing its forces to begin a major operation against the headquarters of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a coalition of Pakistani Taliban groups led by Baitullah Mehsud. Baitullah is one of the world's most wanted terrorists, and U.S. authorities have placed a $5 million bounty on his head. Moreover, he is wanted by Pakistan's government for his alleged role in the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in December 2007.

The operation, however, will require Pakistan's military to deploy into what is considered one of the most dangerous places in the world: South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Pakistan's army must do what no military has achieved in more than 2,000 years of the region's recorded history: use military force to defeat the tribes of Waziristan in their own territory. The Mehsud, along with the Afridi and the Wazir, have traditionally been the most warlike of the Pashtun tribes. Even the British Empire was forced to withdrawal after two disastrous and failed campaigns. Yet with modern technology and public support for the operation, there are hopes that the Pakistan Army will be able to achieve the monumental task.

This article will examine Pakistan's planned operation in South Waziristan and how Baitullah Mehsud might retaliate, and also explain why even a successful operation will not put an end to Pakistani Taliban groups undertaking attacks against U.S. and NATO forces in neighboring Afghanistan.

The Army's Planned Operation in South Waziristan

Beginning in May 2009, the Tank-Jandola road—which travels from Pakistan's settled areas of the NWFP into South Waziristan Agency of FATA—has seen the daily movement of military convoys.[1] Tanks, artillery, armored personnel carriers and trucks carrying troops to the frontline pass through on an hourly basis.[2] Escort vehicles with red flags precede the convoys, warning all traffic to move off the road.[3] No one is allowed to drive alongside a military convoy due to fears of a suicide attack. The forces' general destination is through Jandola to the Sarwakai route of South Waziristan. That route, which runs through the heart of the Mehsud tribe's territory, is the key to a successful military campaign in the area.

Without control of Sarwakai, Baitullah Mehsud's Taliban will have the ability to attack the army at will and retreat across Waziristan into Afghanistan. If the army is able to control Sarwakai, however, it will cut off the Baitullah-led Taliban's ability to retreat into Afghanistan. Under this scenario, to reach the border Baitullah's forces would have to cross territory controlled by the Wazir, the Mehsud tribe's traditional enemy. While the Taliban's ideology has softened that feud, there are still tensions between the tribes. Pakistan's intelligence agencies are trying to ensure that these tensions remain high.[4] The army's overall plan is simple: surround the militants, deploy as much military firepower as possible, and attack them into submission. The army has also deployed soldiers to key points along the perimeter of the operation so that they can kill or capture militants as they flee the bombardment toward Afghanistan. The government's operation is strictly against the Baitullah-led Taliban, and not against other Pakistani Taliban groups.

1 This information is based on the author's first-hand observations in the tribal regions of Pakistan.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 The principal card that the Pakistan Army has used to divide the Waziristan tribes is the issue of foreign fighters. These include mainly Arabs and Uzbeks, who do not see eye-to-eye with each other.

The army's operation in South Waziristan is different from the recent operation in Swat. The objectives of the two operations are clear in their titles. The Swat operation is called Rah-e-Raast, which means "the path of righteousness." The goal is to bring the militants in the Swat Valley back to the "right path." After dislodging these fighters from Swat, the army will maintain a presence in the region to re-establish the writ of the government. The Waziristan operation, on the other hand, is titled Rah-e-Nijat, or the "path to deliverance." The army's plan for Waziristan is simply to eliminate Baitullah Mehsud and his group; there is no plan to establish the writ of the state, or even to counter other Taliban groups. In fact, the army's plan hinges, quite tenuously, on the hope that other Taliban groups will remain neutral in the conflict, allowing the military to focus exclusively on one troublesome faction. Failure to isolate Baitullah will imperil the entire Waziristan operation. No government or military force has ever executed a successful campaign against the combined strength of the tribes in Waziristan.

"Even if the Waziristan operation succeeds, it will not cease cross-border Taliban attacks against NATO and U.S. forces in Afghanistan."

Even if the government is able to cause Waziristan's tribes to unite against Baitullah or at least remain neutral in the conflict, it may not be enough to succeed. As a result, the intelligence agencies are pursuing two strategies. In addition to isolating Baitullah from other tribal militias, the intelligence agencies are also backing a pro-government leader among the Mehsud tribe to rival Baitullah. They hope that such a leader will pull support away from Baitullah, especially if he is killed. Until recently, this was in the form of Qari Zainuddin Mehsud, a relative of slain Taliban commander Abdullah Mehsud. With support from the government and Turkistan Bhittani, the leader of the

Bhittani tribe, Qari Zain was trying to weaken Baitullah's popularity.[5] Recently, he launched a much publicized smear campaign questioning Baitullah's commitment to Islam and the Taliban cause, and his "unpatriotic" motives for attacking Pakistani security forces. That gamble failed, however, because Qari Zain was gunned down by one of his own bodyguards allegedly on the orders of Baitullah.[6] Qari Zain's mantle has now been passed to his brother, Misbahuddin, who has vowed to carry on the "jihad against Baitullah Mehsud."

Pakistan's last offensive against Baitullah Mehsud's militants in 2008 ended in a de facto cease-fire. There is no clear explanation as to why the government failed to achieve success in 2008. The militants themselves admitted that they "had been pushed" to the limit.[7] The army clearly had the upper hand in the offensive, yet for some reason pulled back. That action was in character with all of Pakistan's security operations in the region since the 9/11 attacks in the United States. The security forces have regularly pursued the militants in response to international pressure, and consistently ended up forging peace deals with them. As explained in a BBC report,

> The militants control territory throughout the North West Frontier Province and every operation by the army has ultimately ended with the army losing territory. In fact, there is a recurring pattern to the army's offensives. Troops nearly always tend to be deployed following international claims that the area in question is newly under al-Qaeda's control and poses a threat to the country's nuclear arsenal.[8]

It is likely that Pakistan's government wants to avoid turning the militias in the tribal areas firmly against the government due to concern about their ability to destabilize Pakistan.

Baitullah's Ability to Retaliate

Although the Waziristan operation has begun, Baitullah Mehsud has not yet retaliated in any significant manner. His only alleged gesture of retaliation was the assassination of Qari Zain. His failure to respond is probably because he has not yet been pressured to the point of taking action. Despite its claims, the army has yet to kill or arrest a single senior Taliban commander in Waziristan, or even in Swat.[9] Reports from Waziristan suggest that while the army has been expending a substantial amount of ammunition, there has been little loss of life on the militants' side. As one senior ex-intelligence official said, "They want to see what the real situation on the ground is likely to be, before going in with full force."[10]

There are several reasons why both Baitullah and Pakistan's military have reacted timidly. Baitullah is likely hoping that the other Pakistani Taliban leaders in the tribal areas will begin retaliating against the government due to encroachments on their territory. For their part, Pakistan's intelligence services are being careful to keep Maulvi Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadur, two other top Taliban commanders in Waziristan, out of the equation. Unfortunately, this may no longer be possible.[11] Both men operate out of Waziristan, and while both leaders have said they have no conflict with the Pakistan Army, they are vehemently opposed to the Pakistani military entering their territory. Furthermore, they already collaborate with Baitullah's faction during cross-border raids in Afghanistan. Indeed, as soon as the army moved convoys across their territory, a number of incidents have occurred. On July 5, militants loyal to Hafiz Gul Bahadur ambushed a military convoy outside the town of Miramshah in North Waziristan, killing 22 soldiers.[12] After the incident, a spokesman for the militant leader said they were breaking off their peace deal with the government. Maulvi Nazir, operating out of South Waziristan, has already announced the dissolution of his peace deal with the government.[13] The army immediately responded by saying it was not conducting an operation in North Waziristan and that its actions were only against Baitullah Mehsud. Subsequently, efforts were launched to reconcile "differences" with both Taliban commanders to prevent misunderstandings.

Unfortunately, the July 5 incident is not an isolated misunderstanding. The fact remains that all the Taliban factions are suspicious of the army, and despite differences immediately band together if another faction is threatened by a military operation. Throughout history, each government that has attempted to pacify the region has practiced a strategy of "divide and rule," and the region's tribes understand its dynamics well.

Baitullah and his faction also have a more direct way to retaliate against the Pakistani government. They retain the option to strike in Pakistan's major cities to politically destabilize the country. The fact that Baitullah has not already exercised this option since the start of the Waziristan offensive likely signifies that the army's operation is not yet intense enough. When the army does decide to escalate their campaign, the recoil will likely be felt from Islamabad to Karachi. Baitullah Mehsud has one of the most efficient militant networks in the country, with extensive ties to Punjabi-based militant groups such as Jaysh-i-Muhammad,

5 The Wazir are the largest of Waziristan's tribes. They are divided into two main branches, the Utmanzai Wazir (predominantly in North Waziristan) and the Ahmedzai Wazir (South Waziristan). The tribe stretches into eastern Afghanistan, and many tribesmen have dual nationalities. The Mehsud are the next largest in size. The Bhittanis are among the smallest of the tribes in Waziristan.

6 For more on the assassination of Qari Zain, see Rahimullah Yusufzai, "The Significance of Qari Zain's Assassination in Pakistan," *CTC Sentinel* 1:7 (2009).

7 Personal interview, Baitullah Mehsud and militants, South Waziristan Agency, May 2008.

8 Syed Shoaib Hasan, "Long War Against Pakistan Taliban," BBC, June 2, 2009.

9 The Swat Taliban militants operated under 15 senior commanders. All of these were later named in government "most wanted" lists. See "Pakistan Puts up Taliban Chief Reward," BBC, May 29, 2009. The army says only two of these commanders might have been killed, but could not confirm their deaths with certainty.

10 Personal interview, former Pakistani intelligence official, Islamabad, July 3, 2009.

11 The Pakistan Army has made peace deals with both leaders. In September 2006, they forged a deal with Hafiz Gul Bahadur, while in March 2007 they brokered a deal with Maulvi Nazir Ahmed. The conditions of the deal were that the army would keep its strength to the minimal in their territories and not use it to conduct any sort of military operation in the region. The army also tacitly agreed to "look the other way" as the Taliban carried out cross-border raids. This has kept them from attacking the Pakistan Army. See "Pakistani Militants Abandon Deal," BBC, June 30, 2009.

12 Mushtaq Yusufzai, "22 Soldiers Killed in Waziristan," *The News International*, June 29, 2009.

13 Ibid.

Harkat-ul Mujahidin and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi.[14] Any serious operation in Waziristan will at least in the short term unite the Taliban leadership and increase militant attacks across Pakistan. By retaining the capability to execute suicide attacks in Pakistan's major cities, Baitullah Mehsud and his affiliates have a stranglehold over the Pakistan government's actions in the tribal areas.

Conclusion

Even if the Waziristan operation succeeds, it will not cease cross-border Taliban attacks against NATO and U.S. forces in Afghanistan. In fact, the operation may provide greater impetus to the flow of militants across the border. Baitullah has always been more focused on effecting changes in Pakistan, and his death would have little or no effect on the situation in Afghanistan. As stated by Qari Misbahuddin, who is now leading the anti-Baitullah faction among the Mehsud, "Jihad against America and its allies in Afghanistan would continue" if Baitullah was killed. "Pakistan's government only has problems with the foreign militants in the area. They [the government] have always supported us in the jihad in Afghanistan."[15]

The lessons are clear. The army's goal is to eliminate one Pakistani Taliban commander due to his penchant for attacking Pakistan's government and military. Its success in this operation will depend on whether it can isolate Baitullah from Waziristan's other tribal commanders. Furthermore, even if Pakistan succeeds in the Waziristan operation, it will have little effect on the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan.

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14 For more details on the "Punjabi Taliban," see Hassan Abbas, "Defining the Punjabi Taliban Network," *CTC Sentinel* 2:4 (2009).

15 Syed Shoaib Hasan, "A Very Strange Taliban Burial," BBC, June 24, 2009.

A Diagnosis of Somalia's Failing Transitional Government

By Anonymous

FOR THE SECOND time in two years, Somalia's UN-backed Transitional Federal Government (TFG) appears to be on the verge of failing. It is being relentlessly attacked by a coalition of Islamist transnational extremists and Islamist nationalists determined to topple the government in Mogadishu. The most recent reports indicate that TFG forces[1] fully control only six of Mogadishu's 16 districts, or about 35% of the capital; local journalists claim that the TFG's actual control is significantly less than that.[2] The securest area is a small patch in the southern part of the city, where 4,300 African Union troops from Uganda and Burundi are guarding the presidential palace, the airport and seaport. The rest of Mogadishu, including the famous open-air Bakara Market, is in the hands of Somalia's al-Shabab[3] militant group and an allied coalition called Hisbul Islamiyya (HI).[4] The opposition's recent success in Mogadishu came after they launched a coordinated offensive on May 7, 2009.[5] Al-Shabab and HI have already increased control over most of Somalia's regions outside of the capital.[6]

The current situation in Somalia is exactly what the United States, the United Nations, the African Union, the League of Arab States and other external actors had hoped to prevent when they endorsed the UN-sponsored Djibouti peace process in 2008 that led to the election of Islamist opposition leader Shaykh Sharif Shaykh Ahmad as president of a new and improved TFG.[7] The actors had hoped that the Islamist cleric, who appeared to be a moderate and a leading figure in the Islamic Courts Union (ICU),[8] would act as a bridge between the West and the Somali hardliners who were once his allies in the ICU.[9] Sharif's rise to power in the TFG, however, only served to further infuriate the hardliners, who immediately labeled him a Western "puppet." It spawned the birth of a new coalition group in early 2009, HI, and intensified the insurgency against the TFG.

1 "TFG forces" refer to government soldiers who had been previously recruited by the transitional government of President Abdullahi Yusuf and Islamic Courts Union (ICU) fighters who remained loyal to Shaykh Sharif Shaykh Ahmad. ICU fighters battled Yusuf's forces from early 2007 to the end of 2008, but a deal to merge Shaykh Sharif's opposition faction and the TFG in June 2008 required government soldiers and Sharif's ICU loyalists to work alongside each other.

2 This is an estimate extrapolated from interviews with seven Somali sources living in various areas of Mogadishu. The consensus is that TFG forces remain in five districts in southern Mogadishu and only one in the north. The sources add that al-Shabab has been offering cash for TFG weapons and for the troops to desert their posts.

3 Al-Shabab has ties to al-Qa`ida.

4 Hisbul Islamiyya is an Islamic party founded in February 2009. It is composed of four factions opposed to Shaykh Sharif's new government: the hard-line Asmara wing of the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia led by Shaykh Hassan Dahir Aweys; Harakat Ras Kamboni, a southern Somali Islamist group affiliated with Shaykh Hassan "Turki," who has had ties with al-Shabab; the Islamic Front of Jabhatul Islamiyya, an insurgent group formed in 2007 to oppose Ethiopian troops in Somalia; and a little-known, Harti clan group called Anole and based in Kismayo. It has largely allied itself to al-Shabab, although it is a distinct organization.

5 A reliable Somali source said the violence was triggered by an attempt by ICU fighters to assassinate an al-Shabab commander named Qoslaye, who led al-Shabab's "death squad" in Mogadishu. Qoslaye escaped but his trusted bodyguard was killed. Enraged, Qoslaye ordered an attack on ICU forces. For more background details, see "Al-Shabab Blamed for Murder of Somali Lawmaker and Commander," Voice of America, April 17, 2009.

6 This does not include the self-declared independent Republic of Somaliland and the provisionally autonomous Puntland State of Somalia in the north. For an in-depth and current look at the status of forces in Somalia's regions apart from Somaliland and Puntland, see Michael A. Weinstein, "The Status of Conflict in the Southern and Central Regions of Somalia," *CTC Sentinel* 1:7 (2009).

7 The deal, signed in June 2008, subsequently led to the pullout of Ethiopian troops from Somalia. For details of the Djibouti peace agreement, see International Crisis Group, "Will Djibouti Do the Trick?" July 6, 2008.

8 "Somalia's Moderate Islamist Leader," BBC, January 22, 2007.

9 Shaykh Sharif caused a split in the Asmara-based Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) opposition group when he and his followers began secret talks with the United Nations and the TFG in March 2008. ARS hardliners, led by Shaykh Hassan Dahir Aweys, boycotted the talks in Djibouti because of Ethiopia's presence at the discussions. The ARS subsequently became two entities: Sharif's ARS Djibouti faction and Aweys' ARS Asmara faction.

This article will highlight the three main political trends that composed the ICU, outline how the divisions within the ICU created governance problems when it took power in June 2006, explain how these same divisions have led to the current failure of Shaykh Sharif's government in Mogadishu, and reveal some possible scenarios moving forward.

Three Main Factions Within the ICU

According to Somali civil society leaders, journalists, clan elders, residents, and Western analysts interviewed for this article, Somalia's external actors should have known that the depth and nature of divisions among the Islamists in the Courts would prevent an easy political reconciliation and transition. These divisions were apparent well before neighboring Ethiopia, with U.S. support, intervened to end the ICU's rule in December 2006.[10] At its core, the ICU was based around the most dominant clan in Mogadishu, the Hawiye, but it was by no means a homogenous group. From its formal inception in 2000, the Islamists within the ICU were an unwieldy mixture of pragmatists, fundamentalist-nationalists, and jihadists, whose differing political and religious agendas would inevitably cause internal friction.[11]

"The most recent reports indicate that TFG forces fully control only six of Mogadishu's 16 districts, or about 35% of the capital; local journalists claim that the TFG's actual control is significantly less than that."

The pragmatists were led by Executive Committee Chairman Shaykh Sharif Shaykh Ahmad. Most of the pragmatists had been schooled in the generally moderate Sufism current of Islam that took root in Somalia approximately 1,000 years ago. Yet the religious beliefs of many, including Shaykh Sharif, were more in line with a faction of the Muslim Brotherhood movement that promotes the establishment of Islamic caliphates but generally opposes the use of violence to achieve its goal.[12] The pragmatists were at a disadvantage from the beginning, having to compete for power against fundamentalist-nationalists in their midst—represented by *shura* council leader Shaykh Hassan Dahir Aweys and the ICU's southern military commander Hassan Turki—and a new jihadist faction led by Aweys' kinsman and protégé, Aden Hashi Ayro.[13] Aweys' and Ayro's factions also received at the very least rhetorical support from al-Qa`ida.

Aweys and Turki, representing the fundamentalist-nationalist faction, became leading Islamists in the ICU because of their association with the Courts' predecessor, al-Itihaad al-Islami (AIAI).[14] In the 1990s, AIAI received funding from al-Qa`ida,[15] and its leaders have been implicated in terrorist attacks against Ethiopia over the disputed Ogaden region that is claimed by both Somalis and Ethiopians.[16] Somalis familiar with AIAI, however, assert that the movement had never intended to join al-Qa`ida and participate in a transnational Islamic jihad against the West. They argue that Aweys' and Turki's goal was and still is limited to reclaiming Somali-inhabited territories in neighboring countries and forming a Greater Somalia in the Horn of Africa under Islamic law.[17] As one Somali academic noted in 2002, AIAI's social and nationalist ideals distinguished the movement from al-Qa`ida, but the differences were "largely ignored by the U.S. intelligence community, which chose to narrowly focus on AIAI's relationship with bin Laden and al-Qaida."[18]

The jihadist faction was led by Aden Hashi Ayro until his death on May 1, 2008 in a U.S. airstrike.[19] Ayro had a deep and personal connection with al-Qa`ida, having spent time in an al-Qa`ida-run training camp in Afghanistan in the late 1990s.[20] He returned to Somalia and organized the recruitment and training of al-Shabab militia in Mogadishu. Unlike his mentor Shaykh Aweys, however, Ayro was driven primarily by al-Qa`ida's brand of Salafism. As a result, radicals composing al-Shabab are far more aligned to al-Qa`ida's ideals and objectives than radicals who once formed the backbone of AIAI.[21]

"HI's alliance with al-Shabab appears to be one of mutual opportunism rather than shared ideals."

ICU Disagrees Over Governing Structure

After the ICU defeated a group of CIA-funded warlords and took control of Mogadishu on June 5, 2006, there were immediate divisions and disagreements among the three primary factions composing the ICU leadership.[22] The

10 Ethiopia's military invasion technically began on July 20, 2006, when troops crossed into Somalia to prop up the TFG under President Abdullahi Yusuf in the south-western town of Baidoa.

11 Personal interview, Matt Bryden, former International Crisis Group analyst, Nairobi, December 5, 2006.

12 Shaykh Sharif has publicly stated that in his view Shari`a law allows for women to serve in parliament and that the democratic process, which al-Shabab condemns as a "Western" idea, is "not inherently against Islam."

13 As members of the Ayr sub-clan of the Habr Gedir (Hawiye), Aweys and Ayro formed a close association in the mid-1990s. According to an Ayr clan elder interviewed in Mogadishu in 2007, Ayro was under Aweys' tutelage for several years before the Islamic cleric arranged for Ayro to be sent to Afghanistan to be further trained by al-Qa`ida.

14 For background information on AIAI, see International Crisis Group, "Countering Terrorism in a Failed State," May 23, 2002.

15 Ibid.

16 AIAI is also believed to have cooperated with the al-Qa`ida operatives who carried out the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.

17 According to these observers, Usama bin Ladin understood AIAI's determination to achieve Somali unity at any cost and simply exploited it by sending money and weapons to AIAI and co-opting the group into al-Qa`ida's efforts to turn Somalia into a radical Islamic republic.

18 Personal interview, Somali historian, Mogadishu University, Mogadishu, February 11, 2002.

19 Al-Shabab is now led by Ahmed Abdi "Godane," also known as Shaykh Mukhtar Abu Zubeyr.

20 Personal interview, Matt Bryden, former International Crisis Group analyst, Nairobi, December 5, 2006.

21 For an excellent comparative analysis of AIAI and al-Shabab, see International Crisis Group, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia – Losing Hearts and Minds?" July 11, 2005.

22 As Somalia analyst Dr. Michael Weinstein noted in an

pragmatists were reluctant to endorse Shari`a based on strict Salafist interpretations as demanded by al-Shabab, and tried their best to distance themselves from the extremists' idea of justice.[23] The pragmatists were also concerned about the growing ranks of Ayro's al-Shabab militia and its eagerness to shelter foreign al-Qa`ida operatives.[24]

Pragmatists and Salafist ideologues also disagreed on various other issues, including the status of women and what the ICU's official stance should be toward the secular TFG and its Western supporters. For obvious religious and political reasons, al-Shabab flatly rejected the pragmatists' conciliatory approach to the TFG, which was isolated in Baidoa at the time.

The widening agendas between the Islamist factions in the ICU became irrelevant after Ethiopia invaded Somalia in December 2006. With that development, all Islamists faced a common enemy, and "alliances of convenience" were once again formed to fight the Ethiopian occupation.

Aweys and his followers fled to Eritrea. Shaykh Sharif and the other pragmatists also went to Eritrea, where they joined forces with Aweys' group to form the anti-Ethiopian, anti-TFG Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS).[25]

It is widely believed that the Asmara-based leaders directed the insurgency of militias loyal to the ICU in Mogadishu, while Ayro and his lieutenants stayed in Somalia to re-organize, recruit and expand the reach of al-Shabab.[26] It is not known where Hassan Turki went during this time, but it is believed he found shelter among his Ogaden kinsmen inside Ethiopia and in his stronghold in the Lower Jubba region.[27]

The Failure of Shaykh Sharif's Government

By December 2008, the Abdullahi Yusuf-led TFG's popular support had all but vanished and its control of Somalia had been reduced to only a few city blocks in Mogadishu. Alarmed by the prospect of Somalia "deteriorating into an Afghanistan-like cauldron of militant Islamism,"[28] Somalia's external actors entered into secret power-sharing talks with the only Islamist they believed they could work with: pragmatist leader Shaykh Sharif Shaykh Ahmad.[29]

"The defection of Shaykh Sharif to the TFG re-opened the divisions among the Islamist factions and sharpened their agendas."

The defection of Shaykh Sharif to the TFG re-opened the divisions among the Islamist factions and sharpened their agendas. By cutting a deal with the West, the pragmatists saw an opportunity to regain power. The jihadist al-Shabab, however, saw the departure of Ethiopian troops as an opportunity to fill the power vacuum and take over the government. The group that stood to benefit the least from the situation was the fundamentalist-nationalists led by Shaykh Aweys. They could not support a TFG backed by frontline states Ethiopia and Kenya, which are hostile to the nationalists' irredentist claim on their territories. At the same time, the fundamentalist-nationalists were becoming disillusioned by al-Shabab's increasing efforts to rid Somalia of its national identity and replace it with religious zealotry.[30]

The fundamentalist-nationalists found a way to stay viable as a new insurgent group, Hisbul Islamiyya. Led by fighters from the ARS-Asmara faction and the Ras Kamboni Brigades, HI forces are now fighting alongside al-Shabab to oust Shaykh Sharif's government and to force the withdrawal of international troops. Yet as was the case with AIAI and al-Qa`ida, HI's alliance with al-Shabab appears to be one of mutual opportunism rather than shared ideals.[31]

Looking Forward

In May 2009, Shaykh Aweys and al-Shabab negotiated on forming a common organization. Those talks failed, however, but the two factions agreed to continue to support each other tactically.[32] In the wake of these discussions, reports from Somalia suggested that Shaykh Aweys was searching for a negotiated truce with the TFG.[33] As of July 2009, however, Shaykh Aweys and HI have not moved in either direction, and they continue to collaborate with al-Shabab.

Yet if HI were to implement a meaningful truce with the government, the TFG

article published the following month, "The revolutionary character of Somalia's politics became evident when the hard-line Islamist faction of the I.C.U. led by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, who is on Washington's list of al-Qaeda supporters, gained ascendancy over the moderate group headed by Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed on June 25. Whereas Ahmed had said that the I.C.U. was not interested in imposing an Islamist social model on Somalia and was only concerned with bringing peace and order to the country, Aweys insisted that the new I.C.U. would not be satisfied with anything less than a state governed by Shari'a law."

23 "Meeting Somalia's Islamic Insurgents," BBC, April 28, 2008.

24 Personal interview, Somali journalist, Mogadishu, March 20, 2008. According to the journalist, the pragmatists vehemently opposed the harboring of al-Qa`ida operatives in Somalia, which they believed was "tantamount to an invitation for the United States to start bombing the country." The journalist said the pragmatists lacked any power over al-Shabab and were threatened into silence.

25 "Somali Opposition Alliance Begins Fight Against Ethiopia," Agence France-Presse, September 20, 2007.

26 Personal interview, Abdurahin Isse Adow, ICU military commander, Mogadishu, April 3, 2008.

27 In September 2007, Turki allowed an al-Jazira television crew to videotape inside a military camp he was running on the Kenya-Somalia border.

28 Jeffrey Gettleman, "Situation in Somalia Seems About to Get Worse," *New York Times*, December 7, 2008.

29 Personal interview, UN source, Nairobi, August 10, 2008.

30 Al-Shabab's attempts to eradicate Somali nationalism is highlighted in Abdulahi Hassan, "Inside Look at the Fighting between al-Shabab and Ahlu-Sunna wal-Jama," *CTC Sentinel* 2:3 (2009).

31 "Somalia: Aweys Condemns Security Minister's Assassination," Garowe Online, June 19, 2009. In the report, Aweys acknowledged that various armed factions fighting the Somali government do not have a "unified ideology."

32 "Shifts in Somalia as Exile Returns," BBC, April 28, 2009. The BBC reporter, Mohamed Mohamed, says "members of the radical Islamist group al-Shabab were said to have been at his welcoming rally" when Aweys returned to Mogadishu after two years in exile in Eritrea.

33 Scott Baldauf, "The Fiery Sheikh Dahir Aweys May Be Ready to Hash out a Peace Deal," *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 17, 2009. On July 9, 2009, a member of HI reportedly told Radio Garowe that Shaykh Aweys had agreed to peace talks with the TFG, following talks with Egyptian mediators.

would have to agree to at least two likely demands: 1) setting a timetable for the withdrawal of AMISOM, and 2) ending Ethiopia's training, arming and military support of TFG troops, secular warlords and their militias, and the armed Sufi group Ahlu-Sunna wal-Jama in central Somalia.[34] Aweys and HI would be required, among other actions, to sever all ties with Ethiopia's rival Eritrea[35] and renounce extremism and violence to satisfy the international community.

Given the lack of trust between all sides in the conflict, a truce, moreover a peace deal, will be a difficult task. Yet if a settlement could be achieved, a public reconciliation with Aweys could give Shaykh Sharif a chance to redefine his embattled government as a defender of Somali nationalism and Islamic values. A revitalized Islamist government with a popular mandate would be an effective counter to al-Shabab's efforts to grab power, which is of special concern due to its ties with al-Qa`ida and the use of foreign fighters.[36]

It is not at all clear, however, if Somalia's external actors—notably Somalia's immediate neighbors Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti—would be willing to support a Somali government with a nationalist agenda. Such a government would likely result in the neighbors seeking proxies in Somalia to protect their interests and keep the country mired in conflict. Somalia's future again remains dependent on the actions of various actors and groups with radically different agendas for the country.

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34 According to reliable Somali sources in the Gedo region, about 700 Ahlu-Sunna wal-Jama fighters recently returned after completing military training in Ethiopia.

35 Since early 2006, Eritrea has been accused by the United Nations and the United States of funneling weapons to al-Shabab and providing militants a base for terrorist training. New allegations of Eritrean support for Somali insurgents have recently re-surfaced. For details, see Margaret Besheer, "UN Security Council Considering Sanctions Against Eritrea, Others," Voice of America, July 9, 2009.

36 The United States, for example, has alleged that approximately 300 foreign fighters have joined their forces to fight against the TFG. See Frank Nyakairu, "About 300 Foreigners Fighting Somalia Gov't-UN," Reuters, May 15, 2009.

The Status of Conflict in the Southern and Central Regions of Somalia

By Michael A. Weinstein

SINCE APRIL 2009, the southern and central regions of Somalia have been drawn into a more generalized civil conflict between the country's internationally-recognized Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its loosely affiliated allies, and a coalition of armed opposition groups composed primarily of the transnational Islamic revolutionary group al-Shabab[1] and the Islamist-nationalist Hisbul Islamiyya (HI).[2] The broadening of the conflict to the regions from its epicenter in Somalia's capital Mogadishu has disrupted relatively fixed power configurations that had crystallized beginning in late 2007. This has created a highly fluid situation in which projections about the nature of a more stable balance of forces can only be tentative.

Overall, the armed opposition to the TFG currently has the upper hand. The opposition's Islamic administrations in the south are secure. In the center, the Hiraan region is no longer a stronghold of TFG President Shaykh Sharif Shaykh Ahmad's allies in the Islamic Courts. The Galgadud region is dominated by the traditional Sufi Islamist organization Ahlu-Sunna wal-Jama (ASWJ), which is only a TFG ally of convenience. The Middle Shabelle region, which is Shaykh Sharif's base, moved into the column of

1 During the period of the Courts movement's dominance in 2006, al-Shabab was the movement's military spearhead and championed an irredentist program of incorporating ethnic Somali populations in Ethiopia into an Islamic emirate encompassing all ethnic Somali populations and governed by a Salafist interpretation of Shari`a law.

2 Hisbul Islamiyya is an Islamic party founded in January 2009. It is composed of four factions opposed to Shaykh Sharif's new government: the hard-line Asmara wing of the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia led by Shaykh Hassan Dahir Aweys; Harakat Ras Kamboni, a southern Somali Islamist group affiliated with Shaykh Hassan "Turki," who has had ties with al-Shabab; the Islamic Front of Jabhatul Islamiyya, an insurgent group formed in 2007 to oppose Ethiopian troops in Somalia; and a little-known, Harti clan group called Anole and based in Kismayo. It has largely allied itself to al-Shabab, although it is a distinct organization.

Figure 1. Map of central and southern Somalia.

the opposition on May 19, 2009. Moreover, the armed opposition has encircled Mogadishu by gaining dominance to the north in Middle Shabelle and to the south in Lower Shabelle.

This article will examine the recent turn of events in Somalia's regions before identifying the current balance of power in the country.

Recent Turn of Events

Within the context of post-independence[3] Somalia, the southern and central regions belong to the territories under the nominal authority of the TFG. The TFG is presently confined on the ground to precincts of Mogadishu that are protected by a 4,300-strong African Union Peacekeeping Mission (AMISOM). Although the TFG's juridical authority theoretically extends through the whole of post-independence Somalia, the northwestern and northeastern regions are respectively under the de facto control of the self-declared and unrecognized Republic of Somaliland and the provisionally autonomous state of Puntland, both of which have insulated themselves with relative success from the conflict to the south.

The southern[4] and central[5] regions lack both the presence of the TFG and

3 Somalia gained independence in 1960.

4 The southern regions consist of Bay, Bakool, Gedo, Middle and Lower Jubba, and Lower Shabelle.

5 The central regions consist of Hiraan, Galgadud, Middle Shabelle and Mudug, the latter of which has an autonomous administration that has not yet been drawn into the wider conflict.

functioning regimes of their own. As a result, these regions consist of a patchwork of local authorities composed of factions allied to the TFG with varying degrees of affiliation, and factions of the armed opposition that engage in tactical cooperation. These "local authorities" function in cities, towns and villages within the regions to maintain security (such as the removal of extortionate roadblocks) and implement forms of Shari`a law that vary according to the ideological proclivities of the factions in control who consult with clan elders and local clerics. There are also regional authorities with varying degrees of effectiveness.

At the micro-level, political conditions are exceedingly complex, with overlapping and cross-cutting relations among clans, clerics, and political groups. The many and varied actors evince greater and lesser degrees of coordination and contention with one another, depending on whether one faction or coalition dominates an area, or whether the balance of power is more equal. Through the spring of 2009, the southern and central regions have become increasingly contested, making any assessment of the balance of power in each one provisional and problematic.

The political picture in the southern and central regions, which resembles the fragmented conditions of the period between the fall of the Siad Barre dictatorship in 1991 and the Islamic Courts revolution in 2006, is most directly a result of the Ethiopian occupation of southern and central Somalia that occurred at the end of 2006 and ousted the Courts from control of most of the regions. Almost immediately, factions in the Courts began regrouping and launched an insurgency against the occupation that was centered in Mogadishu and achieved limited success and an effective stalemate. The resistance movement altered its strategy decisively in autumn 2007, shifting its focus to the regions, where Ethiopian forces were either absent or stretched thin. The opposition's aim was to take territory, establish administrations in cities, towns and localities, and eventually encircle Mogadishu, where the insurgency continued.

Through 2008, the insurgency increasingly made advances and gained momentum. This was especially true in the south, to the point that when Ethiopia terminated its occupation at the end of that year, the insurgency was dominant in the southern regions. In the south, al-Shabab, which had separated itself from the Courts movement, was strongest. In two of the central regions—Hiraan and Middle Shabelle—factions of the Islamic Courts held sway. In all regions, other factions were present, disputing or collaborating with the major players.

At the end of 2008, the most powerful Courts factions in the central regions allied themselves with the movement's former executive chairman, Shaykh Sharif, who became president of the internationally-supported TFG in December 2008 through a power-sharing agreement with the old TFG in which his faction was incorporated into the transitional government. The faction of the Courts movement led by its former *shura* chairman, Shaykh Hassan Dahir Aweys, which later entered the HI coalition, rejected any deal with the TFG and turned to armed opposition, forming tactical alliances with al-Shabab. With the factions of the original Courts movement divided between those who accepted and those who rejected power-sharing, the stage was set for conflict between the two coalitions.

"The timing of the opposition's May offensive in Mogadishu was based on its judgment that the TFG might receive military support from external powers and international organizations that would shift the balance of power."

During the first half of 2009, the conflict in the southern and central regions mutated from resistance to the Ethiopian occupation and growing control of territory by factions of the Courts movement, to confrontation between those factions willing to participate in the new TFG, if only expediently, and those that abjure participation. The situation took a drastic turn in May 2009 when the armed opposition to the TFG launched a major offensive in Mogadishu that succeeded in taking most of the city. The offensive was halted only by the wall of heavy weapons deployed by AMISOM forces protecting key infrastructure and government installations.

The timing of the opposition's May offensive in Mogadishu was based on its judgment that the TFG might receive military support from external powers and international organizations that would shift the balance of power. Resistance to the offensive by pro-Sharif factions of the Courts movement and TFG forces proved to be weak. In response to the opposition's gains, the TFG has attempted to mobilize any groups opposed to a takeover by the opposition, including former warlords, religious groups fronting for clan militias, figures in former TFG administrations in the regions and their clan militias, and frontline states Ethiopia and Kenya. The mobilization of elements allied by convenience to the TFG has triggered a counter-mobilization by the armed opposition, resulting in the current fluid and volatile political conditions.

The Current Balance of Power in the Regions

Shifting week by week, the current balance of power in the regions is determined by the status of forces of pro-TFG factions and the factions of the armed opposition. In each region, the elements composing the contending coalitions and their relative strength vary.

Most generally, there is a marked difference between the central and southern regions. The former—including Hiraan on the west, Galgadud in the center, and Middle Shabelle to the east—were, before the armed opposition's May 2009 offensive, mainly in the hands of Islamic Courts forces affiliated with Shaykh Sharif, or clan militias contested by al-Shabab in the case of Galgadud. In contrast, the latter, comprising the southwestern Bay, Bakool, and Gedo regions—and the southeastern Middle and Lower Jubba, and Lower Shabelle regions—were dominated by the armed opposition.

Through the spring and into the summer of 2009, the grip of the pro-TFG forces in Hiraan and Middle Shabelle has been broken by the armed opposition,

and Galgadud has continued to be contested. The southern regions remain dominated by the armed opposition, but they are being challenged by forces of former TFG administrations that have massed on the border with Ethiopia in Gedo and Bakool, and issue continuous threats to attack the current Islamist administrations. Ethiopia is widely reported to have set up bases in Hiraan and Galgadud to monitor and contain the armed opposition, and to have crossed into Bakool.[6] Ethiopia has also harbored former warlords from the regions, such as Barre Hirale Shire from Gedo and Yusuf Dabaged from Hiraan, and has trained their forces and forces loyal to the pro-Sharif Islamic Courts.[7] In the deep south, Kenya has moved soldiers to the borders of the Gedo and Lower Jubba regions, triggering threats and counter-threats.

The strategic Hiraan region is currently the most unstable, with its capital Beledweyne divided between the Islamic Courts and HI, and many of its towns under the control of al-Shabab. In an attempt to reverse the momentum of the armed opposition, the TFG's minister of internal security and close ally of Shaykh Sharif, Colonel Omar Hashi Adan, returned to his home region to mobilize forces on the border with Ethiopia at the end of May. Having crossed into Hiraan, Hashi's forces were unable to make headway, and he was killed in a suicide bombing on June 18.[8] Since then, al-Shabab has taken the town of Jalalaqsi, and ongoing mediation efforts mounted by Hashi's replacement, Mohamed Daqane Elmi, have failed.[9] On July 2, the security chief of the Islamic Courts in Hiraan, Shaykh Ibrahim Yusuf, defected to HI, stating that he could no longer "work with the government" after it appealed to foreign troops for help.[10]

In the more isolated Galgadud region, clan militias under the umbrella of the ASWJ, which has allied itself loosely with the TFG, have succeeded in marginalizing al-Shabab, but have not been able to eliminate it as a fighting force. ASWJ, which represents traditional Somali Islam, is suspicious of Shaykh Sharif, who has not committed to its interpretation of the religion. In May, ASWJ political spokesman Kaliph Mahamud Abdi said that his group was prepared to support the TFG on the condition that Shaykh Sharif promised to stop cooperating with foreign Islamic ideologies, especially Salafism.[11]

"Most importantly, changes to the current balance of power will depend on the willingness of external governments to intervene militarily on behalf of the TFG."

The TFG has suffered its greatest loss in the Middle Shabelle region. Middle Shabelle borders the Banadir region, which encompasses Mogadishu. Moreover, it is Shaykh Sharif's home region and has provided his major base of support. On May 19, al-Shabab forces, commanded by Shaykh Abdirahman Hasan Husayn, captured the capital of Middle Shabelle, Jowhar, and have since gained control of most of the region's districts. Fighting has continued as pro-Sharif Islamic Courts forces attempt to oust al-Shabab administrations, but the Courts have not yet been successful.[12]

In contrast to the central regions that are actively contested, the Islamist administrations in the south, which are controlled by various factions of the armed opposition or alliances among them, have not yet faced military attack. Nevertheless, they are threatened by forces on the border with Ethiopia that are led by former warlord Barre Hirale, whose home region is Gedo, and the former TFG administrations of Bakool and Bay, led by former Bay commissioner Hasan Mohammed Bikole, who has said that their forces would include "foreign troops."[13] The power figure behind Bikole is former warlord Mohammed Ibrahim Habsade, the current minister of ports and sea transport of the TFG. In response to the heightened threat level, the Islamist administrations in the southwest have strengthened security by establishing checkpoints. Shaykh Mukhtar Robow, a leader of al-Shabab in Bay and Bakool, said on June 23: "We have issued an order to kill [Muhammad Ibrahim] Habsade."[14] The new al-Shabab commander leading the Bay and Bakool administrations, Shaykh Mahad Umar Abdikarim, said on June 30 that his forces would continue to fight the TFG.[15]

More insulated, the southeastern regions, which include Lower and Middle Jubba and Lower Shabelle, have more secure Islamist administrations. A coalition of opposition groups composed of al-Shabab, Harakat Ras Kamboni (led by Shaykh Hassan Turki) and the Anole militia are in control of southern and central Somalia's second largest city and capital of Lower Jubba, the strategic port of Kismayo. Tensions on the border with Kenya, which are heightened by Nairobi's support for the TFG and hints that it will intervene, have triggered threats by the Kismayo administration to attack targets in Kenya.[16] To the north, the Lower Shabelle region is controlled by al-Shabab, which holds the port of Merka, and HI, which is dominant in Afgoe, abutting the Banadir region.

6 "Ethiopian Forces Conduct Operations in Central Somalia," Radio Simba, June 25, 2009; "Ethiopian Troops Allowed in by Somali Government – Official," Radio Shabelle, June 23, 2009.

7 "Ethiopia Training Fighters Loyal to Moderate Somali Islamist Group," Midnimo.com, July 1, 2009.

8 The identity of the suicide bomber is still disputed.

9 "Somalia: MPs Say They Have Talks With Islamist Organizations in Hiran Region," Shabelle Media Network, June 24, 2009.

10 "Senior Somali Islamist Figure Quits Pro-Government Group," Radio Simba, July 2, 2009.

11 Scott Baldauf, "After Five Days of Assault by Better-Armed Al Shabab Militiamen, Pro-Government Fighters Have Apparently Begun to Retreat," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 12, 2009.

12 "Islamic Courts, Al-Shabab Battle in Southern Somalia Town," Shabelle Media Network, June 25, 2009.

13 "Somali Government to Use Foreign Troops in Ousting Al-Shabab from Regions," Allpuntland.com, June 29, 2009.

14 "Somali Islamist Group Threatens to Kill Cabinet Minister Over Remarks," Garowe Online, June 23, 2009.

15 "Somalia: Hardline Islamist Official Vows to Continue Fighting Government," Shabelle Media Network, June 30, 2009.

16 "Militia to Target Kenya and Ethiopia," *The Nation*, June 30, 2009.

Conclusion

A review of the status of the general conflict in southern and central Somalia specified by region reveals a fluid situation marked by precarious balances of power, factionalization, loose coalitions and, at present, tentative intervention by external powers. Each region has its own particular power configuration that favors the TFG or the armed opposition.

The armed opposition consummated its strategy adopted in late 2007 of encircling Mogadishu by gaining dominance to the north in Middle Shabelle and to the south in Lower Shabelle. In addition, both Middle and Lower Shabelle do not border external powers and, as a result, are relatively insulated from external intervention. This has left the TFG struggling to retain control of the capital, while the opposition—al-Shabab, HI and its supporters—continue to consolidate and contest control over the central and southern regions. Uncertainty prevails and changes will depend on myriad factors. Most importantly, changes to the current balance of power will depend on the willingness of external governments to intervene militarily on behalf of the TFG. Changes also depend on the relative ability of broad coalitions, each composed of factions pursuing their own agendas and often at cross-purposes with one another, to hold together and coordinate efforts.

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A New Phase of Resistance and Insurgency in Iranian Baluchistan

By Chris Zambelis

WHILE THE WORLD remains fixated on the political turmoil engulfing Iran following the June 12, 2009 presidential elections, ethnic and sectarian tensions in the country's southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan[1] continue to fester. On May 28, a massive suicide bombing targeting Shi`a worshippers ripped through the Amir al-Momenin mosque in the provincial capital of Zahedan. Ethnic Baluch Sunni insurgents known as Jundallah (Soldiers of God) claimed credit for the attack, making it the latest in a string of increasingly devastating attacks by the obscure militant group since it emerged in 2003.[2] Abdulraouf Rigi,[3] a Jundallah spokesman, said the attack was intended as retaliation for Tehran's execution of a number of Sunni clerics in recent years.[4] Amid the chaos of the bombing, Jundallah's founder and leader Abdulmalek Rigi called for Sunni clerics in Sistan-Baluchistan to advocate a boycott of the June 12 elections.[5] In a series of subsequent attacks in Zahedan that Iranian authorities have also linked to Jundallah, armed gunmen attacked President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's campaign headquarters in the restive province on May 29, leaving a number of campaign staff and bystanders wounded.[6] In another incident, at least five people were killed in an arson attack against a state-run financial center on June 2.[7]

The Iranian security services responded to the May 28 attack by carrying out an extensive crackdown across Sistan-Baluchistan targeting suspected members and supporters of Jundallah. On May 30, Iranian officials publicly hanged three men near the site of the mosque bombing claiming that they had confessed to supplying the attackers with explosives.[8] Following the execution, Jundallah issued a statement saying that only one of the men executed was in fact a member of the group.[9] Tensions in the province escalated further when rumors circulated that Molavi Abdolhamid Esmaeil Zehi, Zahedan's leading Sunni cleric, was targeted in an apparent assassination attempt on May 31, presumably by state security officials or pro-regime forces seeking to avenge the mosque bombing.[10] Scuffles that ensued between his entourage and protesters led to some injuries and sparked clashes between civilians and the security forces elsewhere in the province.[11] Jundallah itself issued a harsh rebuke of the Sunni cleric's decision to criticize the May 28 mosque attack.

This article will examine the recent history of Baluch nationalism and dissent in Iran, explain how Jundallah has modified its tactics since the end of 2008, and assess whether or not al-Qa`ida may be supporting the Baluch terrorist group.

Baluch Nationalism and Dissent

Iran is a patchwork of diverse ethnic, sectarian, and linguistic communities. Iran's Farsi-speaking, ethnic Persian population—nearly all of whom are Shi`a—represent only a slight majority among Iran's population of

1 The province of Sistan-Baluchistan is often referred to as Iranian Baluchistan. Baluch nationalists sometimes refer to all of the territories where Baluch reside within Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan collectively as "Greater Baluchistan" and the territory in Iran as "West Baluchistan." This article will use the terms Sistan-Baluchistan and Iranian Baluchistan interchangeably.

2 "Cleric: Clues of US, Israel's Involvement in Zahedan Bombing Discernable," Fars News Agency [Tehran], May 29, 2009.

3 It is unclear whether Abdulrauf Rigi is related to Jundallah founder and leader Abdulmalek Rigi. Members of Abdulmalek Rigi's family, including a number of his brothers, have been implicated in previous attacks and other militant activities. In fact, Iranian authorities sometimes refer to Jundallah sarcastically as the "Rigi Group" in an effort to downplay the idea that Jundallah's message resonates outside of a close circle of militants linked to the Rigi family.

4 "Jundallah Claim Responsibility for Bomb Blast," Press TV [Tehran], May 30, 2009.

5 "Leader Urges Vigilance Against Plots," *Iran Daily* [Tehran], May 31, 2009.

6 "'Gunmen Attack' South Iran Election Office," BBC, May 29, 2009.

7 "'Arson Attack' Hits Iran's Zahedan," al-Jazira, June 2, 2009.

8 "Iran Hangs Three Over Mosque Blast," al-Jazira, May 30, 2009.

9 "Unrest Mounts in Zahedan," Rooz Online [Paris], June 2, 2009.

10 In a possible attempt to downplay the incident and reduce sectarian tension, the cleric later refuted reports that he was the target of an assassination attempt.

11 "Unrest Mounts in Zahedan."

approximately 70 million. The rest of the country's population is composed of an array of minority communities, including a large ethnic Azeri population—which makes up at least a quarter of Iran's population—ethnic Kurds, Arabs, Turkomans, Lors, Baluch, Armenians, Jews and others. In spite of Iran's mosaic of cultural identities, Iranians representing different backgrounds tend to share a sense of national identity rooted in feelings of pride and collective consciousness of Iran's ancient heritage.

At the same time, a number of ethno-sectarian and linguistic minority groups in Iran perceive the ethnic Persian-dominated Shi`a Islamist structure of operating a deliberate policy of subjugation, discrimination, and repression.[12] Iran's ethnic Baluch minority boasts a culture and a historical narrative that is imbued with a sense of collective persecution at the hands of colonial and modern regional powers; this has left the Baluch people divided among Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan and without a country of their own.[13] Moreover, ethnic Baluch in Iran, who number between one and four million and belong to the Sunni faith, inhabit one of the country's most underdeveloped and impoverished regions.[14] The region is also a hotbed of cross-border smuggling of drugs, arms, and other contraband. Due to the difficulty in managing the region through traditional administrative and institutional means, Tehran has instead relied on heavy-handed repression to ensure order, an approach that has fed resentment toward the state.[15]

According to Jundallah leader Abdulmalek Rigi, his group has taken up arms in an effort to highlight the plight of the Baluch people in Iran, who he sees as victims of an ongoing "genocide."[16] He has also claimed that in spite of Iranian accusations, Jundallah is not an independence movement nor does it have a radical sectarian agenda.[17] Rigi has even said that he is an "Iranian" and that his only goal is to improve the lives of his people as Iranians.[18] Nevertheless, it is likely that ethnic Baluch in Iran look to their kin across the border in Pakistan's Baluchistan Province—which is home to the world's largest Baluch population and a decades-long insurgency against Islamabad—as a source of inspiration and possibly material support.[19]

"Jundallah's decision to target a prominent Shi`a mosque in Zahedan signifies a new and more dangerous phase in the insurgent group's war against the Iranian government."

A Shift in Tactics and Targets

Until recently, Jundallah's violent campaign has generally featured ambushes, abductions, and bombings against Iranian security forces across Sistan-Baluchistan and symbols of the ruling regime, especially officials and facilities associated with the various branches of the security services. Jundallah's decision to target a prominent Shi`a mosque in Zahedan signifies a new and more dangerous phase in the insurgent group's war against the Iranian government. The latest attack was against a purely civilian[20] target that claimed the lives of least 25 worshippers and injured more than 125. Significantly, the attack occurred while worshippers mourned the death of the Prophet Muhammad's daughter Fatima—an important day of mourning for Shi`a Muslims and a national holiday in Iran—at the second largest Shi`a mosque in the predominantly Sunni Muslim city and region. The potential impact of the attack on the June 12 elections also likely figured into Jundallah's calculus. The timing of the high-profile attack—occurring as it did in the run up to the elections—in addition to the other disturbances in Sistan-Baluchistan also likely linked to Jundallah suggest that the militants intended to escalate their campaign against the regime with the knowledge that the world was following events in Iran closely. This strategy draws international attention to the Baluch cause and exerts pressure on the regime during a period of heightened political awareness in Iran.[21]

12 Significantly, the issue of ethnic and sectarian tensions in Iran was brought to the fore during the recent presidential campaign. Opposition candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi, an ethnic Azeri himself, sought to tap into the simmering resentments of Iranian minorities by promising greater rights and opportunities. In an effort to win over the support of Iranian Baluch and other Sunni minorities, for instance, Mousavi promised to permit Iranian Sunnis to construct their own mosque in Tehran. For more details, see Shahin Abbasov, "Iran: Azeris Cautious About Supporting Native Son Mousavi in Tehran Political Fight," EurasiaNet, June 23, 2009; Nahid Siamdoust, "Can Iran's Minorities Help Oust Ahmadinejad?" *Time Magazine*, May 30, 2009.

13 The Baluch nationalist narrative often portrays the plight of the Baluch alongside that of the Kurds of the Middle East. In this regard, much like the Kurds, the Baluch have also been dispersed and divided across hostile borders.

14 Chris Zambelis, "Violence and Rebellion in Iranian Balochistan," *Terrorism Monitor* 4:3 (2006).

15 For an overview of the human rights situation in Sistan-Baluchistan, see Amnesty International, "Iran: Human Rights Abuses Against the Baluchi Minority," September 17, 2007.

16 Maryam Kashani, "Interview With the Commander of Jondallah and His Hostage," Rooz Online, May 14, 2006.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Among other things, Jundallah regularly exploits the porous border and harsh terrain along the Iranian-Pakistani frontier to circumvent both Iranian and Pakistani authorities. Jundallah often brings those it abducts into Pakistani territory, at least temporarily, suggesting that the group maintains some level of operational infrastructure in Pakistani Baluchistan. Moreover, a number of Jundallah members, including Abdulhamid Rigi, who is one of Abdulmalek Rigi's brothers, were arrested in Quetta, the capital of Pakistani Baluchistan, before being extradited to Iran in June 2008. See "16 Iranian Police Taken Hostage," Press TV, June 14, 2008; "Rigi Brother Extradited," *Iran Daily*, June 15, 2008.

20 In spite of the fact that all of the victims are believed to be civilians and that the mosque was clearly a civilian target, Jundallah spokesman Abdulraouf Rigi stated that the bomber was in fact targeting members of the elite Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and other special security units who he says were conducting a secret meeting inside of the mosque. This statement indicates that, in spite of its recent actions, Jundallah may still be sensitive to accusations that it is resorting to wanton attacks against civilians. See "'Gunmen Attack' South Iran Election Office," BBC, May 29, 2009.

21 In an apparently unrelated incident a few days following the mosque bombing, Iranian security officials reported that they had defused a homemade bomb planted on a Tehran-bound Kish Air passenger airline that had departed from Ahvaz, the capital of Iran's southwestern province of Khuzestan located along the Iran-Iraq border. In addition to being home to most of Iran's oil wealth and significant natural gas deposits, Khuzestan is also home to most of Iran's ethnic Arab minority. Ahvaz

In addition to its recent strike against a civilian target, the attack against the mosque also marked the successful execution of Jundallah's second suicide bombing. The first suicide bombing occurred on December 28, 2008 when Abdulghafoor Rigi, a Jundallah member who also happened to be another one of leader Abdulmalek Rigi's brothers, rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the headquarters of Iran's joint police and anti-narcotics unit in Saravan, killing four police officers and injuring scores more.[22] While mentioning that suicide bombings are not compatible with Baluch values, Baluch nationalist sources claim that the decision by Abdulghafoor Rigi to execute a suicide bombing meant to serve as an act of symbolism that would hopefully inspire fiercer resistance by Iranian Baluch against the regime.[23]

The introduction of suicide bombings into Jundallah's arsenal along with a willingness to target civilians must clearly be of concern to Tehran. Aside from the myriad operational challenges posed by having to defend against determined suicide bombers, let alone defending against suicide bombers intent on striking soft targets such as mosques, Iranian authorities are also concerned about the spread of al-Qa`ida-style radicalism within the Baluch nationalist movement; suicide bombers have become the hallmark of al-Qa`ida's contribution to the insurgencies in Iraq, Afghanistan, and most recently Pakistan.

Outside Involvement?

Iran regularly accuses outside forces of fomenting internal dissent to destabilize the Shi`a Islamist regime from within. A popular claim out of Tehran implicates the intelligence services of foreign powers led by the United States and its allies in, among other charges, actively supporting Jundallah's armed campaign through the provision of funds, arms and training.[24] Iran also sees the United States and its allies behind the array of violent ethno-sectarian insurrectionist movements and other militant opposition forces operating on Iranian soil and beyond Iran's borders. Iran is convinced that any potential American or Israeli invasion of its territory would begin by supporting active insurgencies on its soil.

Iran has also accused Pakistan of supporting Jundallah even though the two countries have a shared interest in quelling Baluch nationalist aspirations and have a history of cooperating to crush Baluch uprisings.[25] In an apparent effort to downplay the group's organic base of support among ethnic Baluch in Iranian Baluchistan, Tehran also frequently refers to Jundallah as a "Pakistan-based" movement.[26]

Additionally, Tehran accuses Jundallah of receiving support from al-Qa`ida and the Taliban. Given the Sunni faith of its members and the increasingly Islamist tone of its discourse, Iran has suggested that al-Qa`ida and its Taliban allies in neighboring Pakistani Baluchistan are behind Jundallah's war against Tehran. In a public statement condemning the mosque attack during Friday prayers the day following the carnage, Ayatollah Sayyed Ahmad Khatami, an influential cleric close to Ahmadinejad and the ultra-conservative ruling establishment, singled out both the United States and Israel in the attack, along with "evil Salafists"—a reference to Jundallah's alleged ties to al-Qa`ida and possibly elements in Saudi Arabia, a rival of Iran—all of whom are presumably intent on sowing divisions between Shi`a and Sunni in Iran.[27] There is clearly a political motive behind Iranian discourse that accuses Jundallah of joining forces with al-Qa`ida or other outside forces. For Tehran, associating Jundallah with al-Qa`ida helps to delegitimize the group's cause.[28]

Nevertheless, observers of Iranian politics often raise concerns about the possible spread of al-Qa`ida's influence within Iran and the ethnic Baluch nationalist movement.[29] Proponents of this theory argue that Jundallah's ideology may have evolved from a strictly nationalist one emphasizing the assertion of ethnic Baluch national identity, culture, and religion within an Iranian context that guarantees greater rights and opportunities to a radical Islamist-oriented ideology that is influenced by al-Qa`ida's brand of extremism. Additionally, the strategic space occupied by Jundallah in southeastern Iran adjacent to Pakistani Baluchistan—a region where the Taliban's influence has experienced a marked rise in recent years—may prove to be beneficial for al-Qa`ida's plans for Pakistan, as it provides another base to operate against Islamabad and the United States outside of the tribal areas. As a result, al-Qa`ida could see in Jundallah an opportunity to gain a foothold in Iran. Jundallah's use of suicide bombings and its apparent willingness to expand its operations against soft civilian targets also bears the hallmark of what some observers see as proof of an al-Qa`ida hand behind Jundallah.

Moreover, al-Qa`ida has demonstrated an impressive ability over the years to exploit and bolster protracted insurgencies in places as diverse as Algeria, Chechnya, Iraq, Afghanistan,

and other locations within the province have witnessed attacks by ethnic Arab nationalist groups. Additionally, Arab nationalists often refer to Khuzestan as Arabistan. Tehran often accuses groups such as Jundallah of collaborating with other insurgent movements operating across Iran, to include ethnic Arab separatists. For more details about the airline incident, see "Iran Defuses Bomb on Tehran-Bound Plane," Press TV, May 31, 2009.

22 Nazila Fathi, "Rare Suicide Bombing in Iran Kills 4," *New York Times*, December 29, 2008.

23 Reza Hossein Borr, "The Armed Struggle in the Eastern Parts of Iran Entered a New Phase When the First Suicide Mission Was Carried Out in a Military Base in Sarawan, Baluchistan, on 29 December 08," January 1, 2009, available at www.thebaluch.com/010109_report.php.

24 "Jundallah Claim Responsibility for Bomb Blast," Press TV, May 30, 2009.

25 The Iranians have said that even if Pakistan is not supporting Jundallah, it is at least turning a blind eye while the United States supports the group from Pakistani territory.

26 Iran even went as far as to summon Pakistan's ambassador in Tehran to protest what Iran sees as Jundallah's association with radical elements and supporters over the border in Pakistani Baluchistan. See "Iran Summons Pakistani Envoy Over Zahedan Terror Attack," *Tehran Times*, May 31, 2009.

27 "Suspects in Zahedan Attack Arrested," *Tehran Times*, May 30, 2009.

28 In a related point, Iranian authorities sometimes refer to Jundallah as Jund al-Shaytan (Soldiers of Satan) in a further attempt to undermine the group's reputation.

29 Syed Saleem Shahzad, "Al-Qaeda Seeks a New Alliance," *Asia Times Online*, May 21, 2009.

and Pakistan. In this context, the brand of violent Salafist Islam that shapes al-Qa`ida's worldview detests Shi`a Muslims, seeing them and by extension the Shi`a Islamist regime in Tehran essentially as heretics and unbelievers.[30]

In spite of these claims, there is no evidence to support the theory that al-Qa`ida is supporting Jundallah. Moreover, although some observers suggest that al-Qa`ida may be mounting a covert campaign against Iran through Jundallah and the larger ethnic Baluch nationalist cause, it is important to note that al-Qa`ida's regional allies and franchises tend to boast of their association with al-Qa`ida and their commitment to its global cause as opposed to downplaying or concealing such links. In fact, in February 2007 Jundallah seemed keen on downplaying its ethno-sectarian character and refuting allegations of its links to radical Sunni Islamists such as al-Qa`ida by adopting a more secular-oriented label: the People's Resistance Movement of Iran (PRMI).[31] Furthermore, while strong ideological differences divide al-Qa`ida and Iran, there is little evidence to suggest that Iran has ever figured prominently as an al-Qa`ida target. Al-Qa`ida's priority has always been to target the United States and its interests and allies abroad. Given the current state of geopolitics in the greater Middle East, tensions between the United States and Iran currently work to al-Qa`ida's benefit. In contrast, an effort by al-Qa`ida to target Iran through Jundallah or other channels would present an opening for closer cooperation between the United States and Iran, to include cooperation against al-Qa`ida itself and its allies in the region.

The nature of Jundallah's links to the Taliban in Pakistani Baluchistan, on the other hand, is less clear. Jundallah and ethnic Baluch insurgents operating in Pakistani Baluchistan are known to profit from the smuggling of drugs, arms, and other contraband. Afghanistan supplies more than 90% of the world's opium; Iran, particularly Sistan-Baluchistan, plays a critical role in the smuggling of the narcotic to international markets.[32] In light of Jundallah's widely known ties to smuggling in Iranian Baluchistan, it is likely that the group (along with other Iranian drug smugglers) crosses paths with the Taliban. Jundallah's contacts with the Taliban are most likely based on jointly profiting from the illicit trade and smuggling as opposed to ideology.

Conclusion

While there is no evidence linking Jundallah to al-Qa`ida or other radical Sunni Islamist extremist movements with a global agenda, the group's apparent willingness to execute suicide bombings and other attacks against civilian targets will remain a cause for serious concern in Iran. To date, Jundallah's violent activities appear to be confined exclusively to Sistan-Baluchistan. Given the group's steady escalation in terms of its execution of tactics and choice of targets in recent months, the next step in Jundallah's evolution may result in attacks outside of Iranian Baluchistan. Indeed, the international focus on Iran during the run up to the recent elections and the attention paid to minority issues during the campaign may have also emboldened the group to escalate its fight. In the meantime, violence and instability in Iranian Baluchistan will continue to present a series of challenges to the Islamist regime in Tehran.

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30 While there is no evidence linking al-Qa`ida to Jundallah, violent Salafist militants do pay attention to Iran, especially on the internet. The official website of the Sons of Sunna Iran is a case in point, located at www.sunnairan.wordpress.com.

31 Chris Zambelis, "Baloch Nationalists Up The Ante In Iran," *Terrorism Focus* 4:3 (2007).

32 "U.N. Hails Iran for Curbing Flow of Afghan Heroin," Reuters, May 21, 2009.

Incorporating Law Enforcement Interrogation Techniques on the Battlefield

By Gretchen Peters

THERE IS CONTINUED dispute whether the "enhanced interrogation techniques" approved by the Bush administration succeeded in extracting reliable information from detainees in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many active and retired military intelligence officers, however, are quietly hoping that Washington and the Pentagon will pursue what they consider to be a far more pressing issue: revamping the human intelligence (HUMINT) system to better equip U.S. troops facing a new and complex enemy. Military interrogators who have worked in detention centers in Iraq and Afghanistan say Cold War interrogation techniques are often ineffective when dealing with an enemy such as al-Qa`ida or the Taliban.[1] Instead, they argue that the puzzle faced by U.S. military units deployed to Afghanistan closely parallels the challenges confronting U.S. law enforcement officers combating organized crime and street gangs in the United States. The day-to-day operations of the Taliban and al-Qa`ida in the lawless border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan more closely resemble those of the mafia than a traditional military force. This suggests that more actionable information can be acquired by applying law enforcement techniques to the counterinsurgency setting.

This article will identify some of these interrogation techniques, and also explain how infantry units can improve on street interviews to gather more intelligence about the Taliban

1 During the Cold War, U.S. intelligence officers could offer resettlement in the West as a trade for information from captured Soviets. That ploy does not resonate with religiously motivated al-Qa`ida and Taliban extremists. Other Cold War techniques that played on a detainee's love of country or concern for his fellow soldiers also fall flat against a transnational and often stateless fighter such as the typical Taliban foot soldier or al-Qa`ida operative; their greatest ambition is often to martyr themselves on the battlefield.

insurgency, criminal gangs operating in the border areas as well as terrorist groups such as al-Qa`ida. The article also argues the importance of using disconnected pieces of intelligence to develop an organizational attack strategy that will eventually help authorities apprehend top insurgent and criminal leaders.

Law Enforcement and COIN Parallels

On the operational level, there are clear analogies between law enforcement and counterinsurgency strategy during street patrols and in the interview room, both places where valuable information and intelligence can be gathered.[2]

A "beat cop" patrolling the streets of an American city who encounters a young man engaged in suspicious activity—perhaps he appears to be selling drugs or stealing a car—faces a similar situation to a NATO foot patrol that comes across a young man planting an improvised explosive device (IED). In both cases, the uniformed security provider probably knows nothing about the individual, and will need to quickly establish the suspect's affiliation. It is possible the suspect is just a hired hand, contracted for a one-time job, or he may be a core member of the target group.

In another example, consider the complexity faced by a police detective sitting in an interview room with a suspected member of an organized crime ring. On occasions when the officer has little or no proof of that suspect's membership in organized crime, a successful line of questioning needs to simultaneously establish the suspect's relationship to the target group, and also flush out details about the specific crime or crimes for which the suspect was detained. A military intelligence officer questioning a detainee captured on the battlefield in Afghanistan might face a similar set of circumstances: the detainee's affiliation may not be clear, and it will be imperative to establish his role and relationship in the wider insurgency.

Building Rapport and Establishing Justification

Although law enforcement interrogation techniques should be increasingly incorporated on the battlefield, there are still valuable lessons to be learned from the army interrogation manual. It contains methods that can be successfully applied to an insurgent or terrorist detainee. "A lot of the techniques laid out in the army manual are not very far from what we teach," said Joseph Buckley, president of John E. Reid and Associates, a Chicago firm that trains law enforcement officers and military personnel in effective interrogation techniques. "It's all primarily based on an emotional and psychological appeal, and building rapport, as opposed to threats and deprivation that just alienate the subject."[3]

According to interrogation professionals, before interviews begin it is important that the military personnel stress that all the information gathered is confidential. The interviewer should not mislead, make false promises or lie to the individual. To get started, law enforcement interviewers recommend asking the subject about their background. Some suspects may have little actionable intelligence, but could offer a wealth of useful historical data. Either way, it is vitally important to record and corroborate such information. This may be especially important in cases where the subject is not a detainee but a member of the community who has come forward, allegedly with important information. "It is dangerous to take what an informant says as gospel and not establish his motive for telling you," said Richard Fiano, the former director of operations at the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). "It could result in faulty information, faulty allies and in the worst cases, dead members of your team."[4]

Even if the subject's information is questionable, there could be small details offered that may be helpful to disrupting the activity of the insurgency. In other words, law enforcement officers state that it is critical to keep a file of what the subject says and corroborate it with other community sources.

During interrogation interviews, the nine-point "Reid Technique" suggests shifting the blame away from the suspect to another person or set of circumstances that prompted the suspect to commit the crime. For example, the young man captured while planting an IED might be offered three possible explanations for his action: he placed the bomb because the Taliban threatened to harm his family if he did not help them; the insurgents offered him money, and his family was desperately poor; or he actually joined the Taliban because he wanted to protect his farmland and hated seeing foreigners in his homeland. Offering the individual a reason to believe his behavior is justified—regardless of how the interviewer privately feels—will encourage the detainee to reveal information. "You need to put yourself in that person's position," said Dan Malloy, a specialist on counterterrorist interrogations at Reid. "You are not trying to convince them that you are on their side, but you need to make them think you understand why they did this."[5]

"A successful interrogator will not permit a detainee to outright deny guilt, but will accommodate and be receptive to reasons the individual provides for why they did not commit the crime. Questions should be posed in a manner that makes it difficult to deny involvement."

Malloy categorizes three types of insurgent or terrorist subjects: the accidental warrior—someone who usually carries out a one-time act for a variety of motives; the opportunist—

2 Law enforcement experts generally avoid use of the word "interrogation," preferring the more neutral term "interview."

3 Personal interview, Joseph Buckley, president of John E. Reid and Associates, July 2, 2009.

4 Personal interview, Richard Fiano, former director of operations at Drug Enforcement Administration, July 7, 2009.

5 Personal interview, Dan Malloy, John E. Reid and Associates, July 7, 2009.

someone who commits the act for money; and the true believer—someone who actually feels strongly about the ideology. The accidental warrior is the most common but will have less actionable intelligence. The opportunist and the true believer will have the most information, but it takes more time to extract it.

Experts say it is important to constantly refine one's technique. One of the best ways to improve is simply by asking a detainee at the end of an interview what led them to make a confession. Often subjects will remark on a comment that made them think they could trust the interviewer. "There is a whole art to interviewing," said Fiano. "By the end, the best informants will think they are your friend."[6]

Avoiding Denials and Acquiring Details

During the course of a detainee interview, which may last hours, various themes can be explored or changed until the subject becomes responsive. A successful interrogator will not permit a detainee to outright deny guilt, but will accommodate and be receptive to reasons the individual provides for why they did not commit the crime. Questions should be posed in a manner that makes it difficult to deny involvement.[7]

To close the interview, the interrogator should offer the detainee two justifications for what happened—one more socially acceptable than the other. When the detainee accepts one of these options, guilt is assumed. Using the scenario of the captured IED facilitator, the interrogator should suggest to the detainee that he agreed to plant the bomb in return for money for his family. Another argument would be to suggest to the detainee that he committed the crime because he believed he would be rewarded in the afterlife for killing non-Muslims.

Nevertheless, a criminal investigator will not always expect a full confession. It may be just as useful to extract some worthwhile piece of information that can help further the investigation. Perhaps the young man detained after planting the IED will not admit he is a Taliban member, but will lead authorities to the individual who provided him the explosives and told him where to plant them. In the counterinsurgency environment, the latter result may be more useful than a full confession.

Learning to Work the Streets

In addition to interrogation interviews, significant information can be acquired from the community. Police investigators who work street gangs in U.S. cities say their best intelligence comes not from the interview room, but from the uniformed officers who patrol the streets. Good street officers get to know members of the community and are the first ones on hand when a crime or violent act occurs. "You have to know your community and you have to have the gift of gab," said a Los Angeles Police Department detective with more than 30 years of experience. "A gang officer gets out of his car and knows the people in his neighborhood. He is a guy who talks to somebody on the street and that person calls him back two weeks later."[8] Cultural, linguistic and ethnic divides do not have to be a barrier, but there has to be open dialogue between the security providers and the community.

"Once these district-level sketches are folded into a nationwide portrait, a clearer image of the wider insurgency will emerge for senior military intelligence officials, including weak points in the command structure, and ways to disrupt the group and target its leadership."

In Afghanistan, U.S. Marines deployed to Helmand Province appear to have already put these techniques to the test. A July 3, 2009 dispatch from Agence France-Presse described Marine Brigadier General Larry Nicholson walking through the streets of Garmser, where he bargained for a melon at the local bazaar and asked residents to share their needs and concerns. The article noted that "some people in the bazaar turned away from the brigadier general."[9] In fact, they should have been the individuals who Nicholson and his team pursued and questioned most vigorously. According to law enforcement experts, it is not only important to investigate suspicious behavior, but also to win over those who trust the coalition the least.

There are no clear instructions to be an effective street interviewer, but experts say it is often a good idea to begin conversations with a few baited questions to determine whether the person is generally telling the truth. Patrols should be cognizant of non-verbal indicators, such as jumpy, nervous behavior or subjects who avoid eye contact. Soldiers on patrol can collect a wealth of information about a local community. These include but are not limited to:

- How and where local residents—who will inevitably include insurgents—access telecommunications and the internet.

- How and where the insurgents source their supplies, including components for IEDs, food, medical supplies and fuel.

- How and in collaboration with whom the insurgents fund themselves. Since members of the local community will inevitably be victimized by this criminal activity—whether it is opium smuggling, kidnapping or extortion—showing concern about this problem could help win public support.

Developing an Organizational Attack Strategy

Information gathered from the community and from detainee interviews can be compiled into an organizational attack strategy. Law enforcement

6 Personal interview, Richard Fiano, former director of operations at Drug Enforcement Administration, July 7, 2009.

7 For example, instead of asking, "Was Samir here?" one should ask, "When was the last time Samir was here?" The first question can easily be answered with a "no," while the second, better question makes it more difficult for the detainee to deny the individual was ever there.

8 Personal interview, anonymous police detective, Los Angeles Police Department, July 3, 2009.

9 Ben Sheppard, "US Marine Commander Out Shopping in Afghanistan," Agence France-Presse, July 4, 2009.

officers with years of experience building intelligence on gangs and organized crime groups, including drug trafficking organizations, say the trick is starting at the ground level of the target group and working up to the top.

A retired police officer advising U.S. military units operating in Iraq and Afghanistan said he has watched U.S. troops capture a low-level foot soldier and then begin to question the detainee about the location of high value targets, such as Usama bin Ladin and Mullah Omar in Afghanistan or the late Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi in Iraq. Yet this technique is dysfunctional, he said. A Taliban foot soldier is unlikely to know where Mullah Omar is hiding any more than a dealer selling cocaine on the streets of New York knows how to find the Mexican kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman. Yet that cocaine dealer can lead authorities to the person who supplies him his narcotics, just as the Taliban foot soldier can help international troops locate his commander. In addition, he will almost certainly have details about how his unit is funded—whether it is through the opium trade or other criminal activity—and he may know where they source their weapons and explosives.

Over time, gathering such threads of information will help a military intelligence unit establish a clear picture of how the insurgents operate in each district. Once these district-level sketches are folded into a nationwide portrait, a clearer image of the wider insurgency will emerge for senior military intelligence officials, including weak points in the command structure, and ways to disrupt the group and target its leadership.

Conclusion

Law enforcement experts say the model for attacking organizations such as the Taliban and al-Qa`ida is no different than the method used to bring down drug cartels and organized crime groups. The bigger challenge is changing the military mindset to accept that there is wartime value to "good old-fashioned police work."

An increase in interrogation training would help to equip infantry troops in Afghanistan to gather intelligence that would simultaneously increase force protection and disrupt both insurgent activity and funding. There are currently about 150 former law enforcement officers working as private contract advisers to U.S. Marines and Army regiments deployed to Afghanistan, according to one of the advisers. The DEA is also undergoing the largest "plus-up" in the agency's history, increasing the number of agents in Afghanistan from about 12 to nearly 80, reportedly to support interdiction efforts against major smuggling cartels.[10] These steps should help improve intelligence gathering in Afghanistan.

"Soldiers don't join the military because they want to become cops. I understand that," said one law enforcement adviser. "But this model works. We need to retrain our troops for this model and lose the mentality that they are some day going to be landing on Omaha Beach."[11]

Gretchen Peters is the author of Seeds of Terror *(St. Martin's Press), a book released in May 2009 that traces the role the opium trade has played in three decades of conflict in Afghanistan. She covered Pakistan and Afghanistan for more than a decade, first for the Associated Press and later as an award-winning reporter for ABC News. In fall 2009, she will enter the Josef Korbel School of International Studies for a graduate degree combining Homeland Securities and Criminal Justice.*

10 "U.S. Launches New Fight Against Drug Trade," Associated Press, March 30, 2009.

11 Personal interview, law enforcement adviser to the U.S. military, June 29, 2009.

Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

June 1, 2009 (UNITED STATES): Muhammad Ahmad Abdallah Salih, an inmate held at Guantanamo Bay, was found dead in an apparent suicide. The 31-year-old Yemeni, who was accused of fighting with the Taliban in Afghanistan and of associating with al-Qa`ida, had been held at Guantanamo Bay since February 2002. – *The Australian, June 3*

June 1, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters killed 10 Afghan guards working for a U.S. security firm in western Farah Province. – *Reuters, June 2*

June 1, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Taliban militants kidnapped dozens of students and staff from a Pakistani Army preparatory school in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Hours later, on June 2, as the militants were moving the captives to South Waziristan Agency, Pakistani Army soldiers attacked them and managed to free the hostages. Estimates placed the number of freed hostages at 80. – *Washington Post, June 2*

June 2, 2009 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri released a new audio recording in which he criticized U.S. President Barack Obama on the eve of the president's visit to Egypt. Al-Zawahiri called Obama a "criminal" who is coming to Egypt with "deception" and "to obtain what he failed to achieve on the ground after the mujahidin ruined the project of the Crusader America in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia." He also assured that Obama's "bloody messages…will not be concealed by public relations campaigns or by farcical visits or elegant words." – *AFP, June 2*

June 2, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives near Bagram airbase, 40 miles north of Kabul. Six Afghan civilians were killed in the blast. – *Reuters, June 2*

June 2, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bombing in Paktia Province killed at least eight Afghan security guards. – *Voice of America, June 3*

June 3, 2009 (GLOBAL): Al-Jazira broadcast a new audiotape purportedly

from Usama bin Ladin, in which the al-Qa`ida leader said that "[President] Obama has followed the footsteps of his predecessor in increasing animosity toward Muslims and increasing enemy fighters and establishing long-term wars. So the American people should get ready to reap the fruits of what the leaders of the White House have planted throughout the coming years and decades." The statement was released as President Barack Obama arrived in the region for a Middle East tour. – *New York Times, June 3*

June 3, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber on a motorcycle blew himself up near the Pakistan border in Kandahar Province. The explosion killed five security guards escorting a NATO convoy. – *Voice of America, June 3*

June 3, 2009 (NORTH AFRICA): British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said that there was "strong reason to believe" that al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) executed a British hostage on May 31. The hostage, Edwin Dyer, was likely kidnapped from Niger on January 22, and then reportedly held in Mali. The government refused to agree to AQIM's demand that it free a prominent Muslim cleric, Abu Qatada, in exchange for Dyer's release. – *AFP, June 3*

June 5, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber killed 38 people at a mosque in Upper Dir District of the North-West Frontier Province. The incident caused hundreds of tribesmen in the area to launch an offensive against Taliban militants, who they blamed for the attack. – *AFP, June 5; BBC, June 8*

June 5, 2009 (SOMALIA): Rival Islamist groups fought for control of the town of Wabho in central Somalia, leaving at least 56 militants dead. Both al-Shabab and Hisbul Islamiyya claimed to have won control of the town from the pro-government Sufi group, Ahlu-Sunnu wal-Jama (ASWJ). ASWJ, however, claimed that they still had control of the town. – *Reuters, June 5*

June 6, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Two pro-Taliban clerics were killed during a shootout between security forces and militants in Mardan District of the North-West Frontier Province. Security forces had custody of the two clerics at the time, and were transporting them to Peshawar when militants ambushed the convoy. One soldier was also killed in the incident. – *Reuters, June 6*

June 6, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber walked to a police emergency help center in Islamabad and detonated his explosives, killing two policemen. – *AFP, June 6*

June 8, 2009 (IRAQ): A bomb ripped through a minibus in a largely Shi`a area of southern Baghdad, killing at least seven people. – *New York Times, June 8*

June 9, 2009 (UNITED STATES): Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, a suspected terrorist held at Guantanamo Bay, arrived in New York to face criminal prosecution for his role in the August 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Ghailani is the first Guantanamo detainee to arrive in the United States for prosecution. – *Reuters, June 9*

June 9, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): U.S.-led forces killed a Taliban commander and approximately 16 militants in a precision airstrike in Ghor Province. The commander, Mullah Mustafa, reportedly had links to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. – *AFP, June 9*

June 9, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani Taliban militants attacked the five-star Pearl Continental hotel in Peshawar, killing at least 15 people. Militants opened fire on the hotel's security guards, while a suicide bomber detonated a truck packed with explosives in the hotel's parking lot. The explosion caused the collapse of the building's western wing. – *New York Times, June 9; AFP, June 9*

June 10, 2009 (IRAQ): A car bomb ripped through an outdoor market near the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriyya in Dhi Qar Province, killing at least 28 people. – *New York Times, June 10*

June 10, 2009 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida's leader for Afghanistan, Shaykh Sa`id Mustafa Abu'l-Yazid, reportedly posted an audio message on Islamist web forums complaining that his fighters were short on food, weapons and other supplies. – *Reuters, June 12*

June 10, 2009 (SYRIA): Lawyers for senior al-Qa`ida ideologue Mustafa Setmariam Nasar, also known as Abu Mus`ab al-Suri, told Reuters that the ideologue is imprisoned in Syria. Nasar was captured in Pakistan in 2005, although his whereabouts since then have been unclear. – *Reuters, June 10*

June 11, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Two militants on motorcycles threw a grenade on a road in Peshawar. When police came to investigate the scene, a suicide bomber blew himself up, killing three people. – *IANS, June 11*

June 11, 2009 (PHILIPPINES): Philippine authorities arrested Ansar Venancio, who was allegedly involved in the December 30, 2000 bombing of a commuter train in Manila that killed 22 people, in addition to an attack in 2003 on an international airport in Davao city. Venancio is considered a bomb expert with Jemaah Islamiya. – *AFP, June 11*

June 12, 2009 (IRAQ): Harith al-`Ubaydi, the leader of the largest Sunni bloc in Iraq's parliament, was assassinated by a gunman outside a Baghdad mosque. The gunman, who was a teenager, was killed after he exploded a grenade while fleeing authorities. – *TimesOnline, June 12; AP, June 13*

June 12, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber blew himself up amid a group of fuel tankers in Helmand Province, causing fires to at least six tanker trucks and killing at least eight Afghan drivers. The trucks were intended for international troops in the country. – *Voice of America, June 13*

June 12, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Prominent anti-Taliban cleric Sarfraz Naeemi was killed by a suicide bomber in Lahore, the capital of Punjab Province. Three of his followers were also killed by the bomber. Within minutes of the attack, a second suicide bomber blew up at a mosque in Nowshera District of the North-West Frontier Province. The second attack killed four people. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan took credit for both attacks. – *Washington Post, June 13; AFP, June 12*

June 13, 2009 (GLOBAL): American al-Qa`ida member Adam Gadahn released a new videotape in which he criticized Israel's December 2008 offensive in Gaza. – *CNN, June 13*

June 14, 2009 (PAKISTAN): The governor of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province announced that Pakistan's military will carry out an offensive against Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud and his militia. – *Reuters, June 14*

June 14, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. unmanned aerial drone strike killed approximately three militants in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *Reuters, June 14*

June 14, 2009 (YEMEN): Yemeni authorities announced the arrest of a Saudi al-Qa`ida financier who they consider "one of the most dangerous members of al-Qa`ida." The financier, Hassan Hussein bin Alwan, was arrested the previous week. – *AFP, June 14*

June 15, 2009 (YEMEN): The mutilated bodies of two German nurses and a South Korean teacher were discovered by shepherds in Yemen's Saada region. Later in the day, six other foreigners were found dead. The nine foreigners—who all worked for World Wide Services Foundation, a Dutch relief group—disappeared on June 12. It was not immediately clear who was responsible for the murders. – *Independent, June 15; Christian Science Monitor, June 15; AP, June 15*

June 16, 2009 (MALI): Security forces in Mali captured a suspected guerrilla base for al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb. The base was in the Sahara Desert near the Algerian border. During the operation, 12 militants and five soldiers were killed. – *BBC, June 17; AFP, June 16*

June 17, 2009 (IRAQ): Iraqi police claimed to have arrested al-Qa`ida's deputy commander in Iraq, Ahmad `Abid `Uwayyid. Authorities said that `Uwayyid was responsible for the June 12 assassination of Harith al-`Ubaydi, the leader of the largest Sunni bloc in Iraq's parliament. – *Radio France International, June 17*

June 17, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): Three Danish soldiers were killed after a bomb ripped through their vehicle in Helmand Province. – *AFP, June 17*

June 17, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Armed tribesmen in Upper Dir District of the North-West Frontier Province killed six suspected Taliban militants. The tribesmen were part of a group of 3,000 who formed a *lashkar* (militia) to fight against Taliban forces to avenge the 38 people killed in a suicide bombing at a mosque on June 5. – *AFP, June 17*

June 17, 2009 (SOMALIA): Somali government forces attacked Islamist opposition strongholds in Mogadishu, leaving at least 17 people dead. Mogadishu's police chief, Colonel Ali Said, was killed in the fighting. – *AP, June 17*

June 17, 2009 (ALGERIA): Islamist fighters from al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb killed 20 Algerian paramilitary policemen in a desert ambush. – *UPI, June 18*

June 17, 2009 (THAILAND): Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said that he does not believe the insurgency in southern Thailand is linked to the al-Qa`ida network. – *Bangkok Post, June 17*

June 18, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. unmanned aerial drone killed approximately 13 people near Wana in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *New York Times, June 18*

June 18, 2009 (YEMEN): A Saudi al-Qa`ida suspect, Nayif Yahya al-Harbi, turned himself in to Yemeni authorities, according to Yemen's Defense Ministry. – *Reuters, June 18*

June 18, 2009 (SOMALIA): A suicide bomb ripped through the Medina Hotel in central Somalia's town of Beledweyne, killing the country's internal security minister, Omar Hashi Aden, in addition to 49 other people. Omar Hashi Aden arrived in central Somalia earlier in the month to lead operations against Islamist opposition fighters in the region. A number of other government officials were also killed in the blast. – *Voice of America, June 18; Bloomberg, June 18*

June 18, 2009 (PHILIPPINES): U.S. Colonel William Coultrup, commander of the Joint Special Forces Task Force Philippines (JSOTFP), told reporters that "we know for a fact" that foreign terrorists are operating in Sulu Province in the southern Philippines. The foreign terrorists are from Jemaah Islamiya, which is an al-Qa`ida-linked Islamist terrorist group. – *Philippine Inquirer, June 18*

June 19, 2009 (PAKISTAN): *New York Times* journalist David Rohde managed to escape his Taliban kidnappers and safely find his way to authorities. Rohde had been held hostage by the Taliban for seven months. He was kidnapped outside Kabul, but escaped from a compound in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *ABC News, June 22; New York Times, June 20*

June 20, 2009 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber detonated a truck full of explosives outside a Shi`a mosque near Kirkuk, killing 67 people. – *Reuters, June 20*

June 20, 2009 (IRAN): Two people died in a suicide bombing at the shrine of Iran's revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, in Tehran. – *Reuters, June 20*

June 21, 2009 (IRAQ): A car bomb exploded outside local council offices in Abu Ghurayb district of Baghdad Province, killing at least seven people. – *UPI, June 22*

June 21, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): A rocket attack on the U.S. Bagram airbase killed two U.S. soldiers. – *Washington Post, June 22*

June 22, 2009 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida's commander for Afghanistan, Shaykh Sa`id Mustafa Abu'l-Yazid, told al-Jazira television that the group would use Pakistan's nuclear weapons against the United States if it was able to acquire them. He said, "the Americans will not seize the Muslims' nuclear weapons and we pray that the Muslims will have these weapons and they will be used against the Americans." – *UPI, June 22*

June 22, 2009 (UNITED STATES): U.S. District Court Judge Richard Leon ordered a detainee at Guantanamo Bay to be released. Leon said that Syrian Abd al-Rahim Abdul Rassak was a captive, not a follower, of the Taliban and at one point was tortured by al-Qa`ida. – *AP, June 22*

June 22, 2009 (RUSSIA): A suicide bomber injured the president of Russia's Muslim region of Ingushetia. Ingush President Yunus-Bek Yevkurov's

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SUPPORT
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convoy was attacked by the bomber, and his driver was killed. – *Reuters, June 22*

June 22, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber rammed a car into a convoy of Afghan troops in Kandahar Province, killing three soldiers. – *Reuters, June 22*

June 22, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): Two explosions, one caused by a suicide bomber, killed approximately eight civilians outside an electric company's headquarters in Khost Province. – *Voice of America, June 22*

June 23, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Qari Zainuddin, a Mehsud tribal leader and a pro-government rival of top Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud, was assassinated. Baitullah Mehsud's fighters took credit for the attack. – *New York Times, June 23*

June 23, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. unmanned aerial drone killed six suspected militants in South Waziristan Agency. – *Daily Times, June 24*

June 23, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. unmanned aerial drone targeted the funeral for a Taliban fighter in South Waziristan Agency, killing at least 60 people. The attack was distinct from a separate suspected drone strike in the same tribal agency earlier in the day. – *New York Times, June 23; Daily Times, June 24*

June 23, 2009 (MAURITANIA): A U.S. aid worker was shot to death in the Mauritanian capital of Nouakchott. Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb later took credit for the killing. – *Reuters, June 23; Voice of America, June 25*

June 25, 2009 (UNITED STATES): The U.S. government announced that it was providing Somalia's Transitional Federal Government with an "urgent supply" of weapons and ammunition. – *AFP, June 27*

June 25, 2009 (IRAQ): A bomb ripped through a market in Sadr City in Baghdad, killing approximately 70 people. – *BBC, June 25*

June 26, 2009 (IRAQ): A bomb on a motorcycle exploded at a market in Baghdad, killing 10 people. – *UPI, June 26*

June 26, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A Taliban suicide bomber blew himself up next to an army vehicle in Pakistani Kashmir, killing at least two soldiers. It reportedly marked the first suicide attack by a Taliban militant targeting Pakistani soldiers in Pakistani Kashmir. – *AP, June 26*

June 27, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Security forces raided a Taliban hideout in Karachi, Sindh Province. Five militants were killed during the raid. – *AP, June 27*

June 28, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Taliban militants attacked a Pakistani military convoy in North Waziristan Agency near the Afghan border. Twelve soldiers were killed. – *Reuters, June 28*

June 28, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Pakistan's government offered a 50 million rupee ($615,300) reward for information leading to the capture of Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud. – *AFP, June 29*

June 28, 2009 (PHILIPPINES): Suspected Abu Sayyaf Group militants ambushed police on Basilan Island in the southern Philippines. Seven policemen were killed. – *GMANews.tv, June 28*

June 29, 2009 (LEBANON): Lebanese authorities charged four people with ties to al-Qa`ida and for planning attacks in Lebanon and neighboring Syria. – *AP, June 29*

June 30, 2009 (IRAQ): A car bomb ripped through a crowded market in Kirkuk, killing at least 27 people. – *AP, June 30*

June 30, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): A male suicide bomber disguised as a woman in a burqa blew himself up at the Torkham border crossing in Nangarhar Province, killing a police officer and a child. – *Voice of America, June 30*

June 30, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A group of Pakistani Taliban fighters in North Waziristan Agency pulled out of a peace deal with the Pakistan government, citing U.S. drone attacks and a Pakistan Army offensive as the reasons for their decision. – *al-Jazira, June 30*

June 30, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber blew himself up in Baluchistan Province, killing at least four people. – *BBC, June 30*