

Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

January 1, 2009 (IRAQ): The U.S. military formally handed control of Baghdad's "Green Zone" to the Iraqi government. - *CNN, January 1*

January 1, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban insurgents attempted to attack a joint base of Afghan and U.S.-led troops in Helmand Province. Three insurgents were killed. - *Reuters, January 2*

January 1, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): An insurgent driving an explosives-laden vehicle toward Canadian troops was shot and killed before he reached the target. The incident occurred in Shah Wali Khot district of Kandahar Province. - *Reuters, January 2*

January 1, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked an Afghan security force vehicle in Herat Province, killing one person. - *Reuters, January 2*

January 1, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. unmanned aerial drone fired two missiles at separate targets in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. An estimated three foreign militants were killed in the attack. U.S. counterterrorism officials later revealed that one of the dead, Usama al-Kini, was a Kenyan national and al-Qa`ida's chief of operations in Pakistan. Al-Kini's Kenyan lieutenant, Shaykh Ahmad Salim Swedan, was also reportedly killed in the strike. According to the *Washington Post*, both al-Kini and Swedan "were ranked among the 23 most-wanted terrorists by the FBI, with a bounty offering of \$5 million for their capture." Al-Kini has also been accused of organizing the failed assassination attempt on Benazir Bhutto in October 2007, along with the September 16, 2008 car bombing on the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, which killed 53 people. - *Reuters, January 2; Washington Post, January 9*

January 2, 2009 (CANADA): Canadian authorities released from detention Syrian citizen Hassan Almrei, who had been in custody since 2001 due to suspected ties with al-Qa`ida and other terrorist groups. He was the last suspect being held without charges on Canadian "security certificates."

Almrei will remain on house arrest until authorities decide whether or not he can be deported. - *UPI, January 3*

January 2, 2009 (IRAQ): At least 23 people were killed after a suicide bomber struck a predominately Sunni Arab tribal meeting in al-Yusufiyya near Baghdad. One of the reasons for the Quaraghuli tribal gathering was for the tribe's Shi`a minority and Sunni majority to reconcile their differences. They also had gathered together to discuss candidates in the upcoming provincial elections. The bomber was a member of the tribe. - *AFP, January 2; Los Angeles Times, January 3*

January 2, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. unmanned aerial drone fired two missiles at targets in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Distinct from a similar attack the previous day in the same agency, the latest strike killed an estimated four militants. - *Reuters, January 2; RTT News, January 2*

January 2, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani authorities reopened the Khyber Pass, allowing transport trucks to make their way into Afghanistan to supply Western forces. Authorities shut down the pass for three days in an attempt to weaken the militants who have been increasingly attacking transport vehicles. - *Reuters, January 2*

January 3, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani security forces arrested Ustad Yasar, a senior Afghan Taliban official who was released from prison in Afghanistan as part of a prisoner swap in 2007. Yasar was apprehended in Peshawar after security forces received a "tip-off" about his present location. - *Reuters, January 3*

January 3, 2009 (SOMALIA): A roadside bomb killed four Ethiopian soldiers near Mogadishu. - *Voice of America, January 4*

January 4, 2009 (IRAQ): A female suicide bomber killed 35 people during a Shi`a religious procession near the Kadhimiyya shrine in Baghdad. - *AFP, January 5*

January 4, 2009 (IRAQ): The U.S. government gave the Iraqi government control of the anti-al-Qa`ida Sunni Arab fighters aligned with the Sons of Iraq movement in Diyala Province. - *AP, January 4*

January 4, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): An Australian soldier was killed by a Taliban rocket attack in Uruzgan Province. - *AP, January 5*

January 4, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber killed six people in Dera Ismail Khan in the North-West Frontier Province. According to reports, a small bomb went off near a café, and 10 minutes later the suicide bomber targeted police and others who flocked to the scene of the initial blast. - *UPI, January 4*

January 4, 2009 (THAILAND): Today marked the fifth year anniversary of the resumption of violence in southern Thailand. According to Thailand's MCOT media conglomerate, which cited police figures, "Since the raid on the army base in Narathiwat on January 4, 2004 to November 2008, nearly 9,000 insurgent attacks and more than 3,000 deaths were recorded. More than 50 percent of the assaults were shooting attacks." - *MCOT, January 4*

January 5, 2009 (FRANCE): French authorities placed three al-Qa`ida suspects on trial for plotting the 2002 suicide bombing of a historic synagogue in Tunisia that killed 21 people. Two suspects include German national Christian Ganczarski and Tunisian national Walid Nawar. The third suspect, Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, who is being held at Guantanamo Bay, will be tried in absentia. Nawar was the suicide bomber's brother, while Ganczarski converted to Islam and allegedly played a large role in al-Qa`ida's European network. - *AFP, January 4*

January 5, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Taliban militants in Mohmand Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) kidnapped an 11-member peace delegation from neighboring Bajaur Agency. The kidnapped tribal elders were reportedly in Mohmand to ask the Taliban to stop firing rockets into Khar, the main town in Bajaur Agency. - *AFP, January 6*

January 6, 2009 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri released an audio statement on Islamist web forums accusing Israel of conducting a "crusade against Islam and Muslims" due to its current offensive in Gaza. He vowed revenge for the deaths

of Palestinians, stating, "We will never stop until we avenge the death of all who are killed, injured, widowed and orphaned in Palestine and throughout the Islamic world." Al-Zawahiri also called the offensive "Obama's gift to Israel" before he takes office. - *Fox News, January 6; ABC News, January 6*

January 6, 2009 (UNITED STATES): According to State Department Counterterrorism Coordinator Dell Dailey, Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri have been unable to launch a successful major terrorist operation due to international anti-terrorism efforts. "Bin Laden can't get an operational effort off the ground without it being detected ahead of time and being thwarted," he said. "Their ability to reach is nonexistent." - *Reuters, January 6*

January 6, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): U.S.-led coalition forces engaged Taliban insurgents in Lagham Province and killed 32 of them. - *Reuters, January 7*

January 6, 2009 (SOMALIA): A roadside bomb killed a Ugandan soldier in Mogadishu. - *Reuters, January 6*

January 6, 2009 (THAILAND): An unknown number of separatist militants attacked a military base in Pattani Province in southern Thailand, killing at least one Thai army ranger. - *AFP, January 5*

January 8, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide car bomber attacked international troops in Kandahar Province, reportedly killing two U.S. soldiers and one civilian. - *Voice of America, January 8; Voice of America, January 9*

January 9, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): Three U.S. soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb along Highway One, which links southern Afghanistan with Kabul. - *AFP, January 9*

January 9, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber killed at least 10 people, including two police officers, in an attack at a market in Nimroz Province. - *Voice of America, January 9*

January 9, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): The U.S. military killed five militants in an attack on a bomb-making network in Zabul Province. - *Voice of America, January 9*

January 9, 2009 (YEMEN): Usama bin Ladin's former driver, Salim Hamdan, was released from a Yemeni prison after serving out his sentence. A U.S. military tribunal convicted Hamdan in August 2008 for aiding al-Qa`ida; he was sentenced to five and a half years. Since he had already served five years at Guantanamo Bay by the time of the conviction, Hamdan was transferred to Yemen at the end of 2008. - *AP, January 10*

January 9, 2009 (SOMALIA): A top official in the Islamic courts movement, identified as Mohamed Abdi Gelle, was assassinated by masked gunmen in Galgadud region in central Somalia. There was no claim of responsibility. - *Shabelle Media Network, January 9*

January 10-11, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Hundreds of Taliban fighters attacked a Frontier Corps military base in Mohmand Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Between six and ten security personnel and 40 Taliban fighters were killed during the fighting. According to al-Jazira, which received its information from a Pakistani military official, "most of the force of about 600 came from Afghanistan and were joined by local Taliban fighters." - *al-Jazira, January 12; Radio Netherlands, January 11; New York Times, January 11*

January 11, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): The Australian Defense Ministry announced that its special forces killed a senior Taliban commander in Uruzgan Province. The exact date of the commander's death was not made clear, although it was likely in the last week. The commander was identified as Mullah Abdul Rasheed and his death has "significantly disrupted insurgent operations in Uruzgan Province," according to the Australian military. - *Reuters, January 11*

January 11, 2009 (SOMALIA): Rival Islamist groups fought for control of a small town in Galgadud region, causing the deaths of approximately 30 people. The fighting was between the radical Islamist military group al-Shabab and the newly-militarized Sufi Muslim group Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama`a. Members of Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama`a claimed that they repelled the al-Shabab assault on the town. - *Voice of America, January 12*

January 13, 2009 (ISRAEL): Israeli military officials announced that their offensive in the Gaza Strip has weakened Hamas, but that the terrorist group may survive. - *Washington Post, January 14*

January 13, 2009 (PHILIPPINES): Approximately 13 prisoners—including one with ties to the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)—managed to escape from a jail in Patikul in the southern Philippines. The prisoners dug a 10-meter long tunnel that brought them to the outside. The ASG suspect was identified as Magambian Sakilan, who was in jail for the illegal possession of firearms. - *Reuters, January 14; Philippine Daily Inquirer, January 14*

January 13, 2009 (SOMALIA): Ethiopian troops withdrew from key military bases in Mogadishu as part of their departure from Somalia. - *New York Times, January 13*

January 14, 2009 (GLOBAL): A new audiotape purportedly from al-Qa`ida leader Usama bin Ladin was released on Islamist internet forums. On the tape, Bin Ladin urged Muslims to launch a holy war against Israel in response to its recent offensive in the Gaza Strip. He also claimed credit for the U.S. financial crisis, stating, "Today the United States is staggering under the attacks of the mujahidin and their consequences...It is drowning in a financial crisis." - *AP, January 14; UPI, January 15*

January 14, 2009 (UNITED STATES): President-elect Barack Obama responded to a new audiotape of Usama bin Ladin by telling reporters that "Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda are our number one threat when it comes to American security. We're going to do everything in our power to make sure that they cannot create safe havens that can attack Americans. That's the bottom line." - *AFP, January 14*

January 14, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): Two British NATO soldiers were killed in an explosion while fighting Taliban forces in Helmand Province. - *AFP, January 15*

January 14, 2009 (MAURITANIA): Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) released a new video statement on Islamist websites urging attacks on Israeli and Western interests in Mauritania in retaliation for Israel's

recent offensive in the Gaza Strip. AQIM leader Abdelmalek Droukdel said in the video, "We urge you to blow up this evil relationship as support of your brothers in Gaza. We ask you to go to jihad and we urge you to rise to strike Western interests everywhere." - *Reuters, January 18*

January 14, 2009 (SOMALIA): Islamist fighters fired mortars at Somalia's presidential palace in Mogadishu. At least five civilians were killed during the clashes between the Islamist militants and government forces. - *AP, January 14*

January 15, 2009 (UNITED STATES): A U.S. federal judge ordered the release of Guantanamo detainee Mohammed al-Gharani, who was apprehended in Pakistan seven years ago when he was 14-years-old. U.S. prosecutors maintain that al-Gharani, who is from Chad, "stayed at an al-Qaeda-affiliated guesthouse in Afghanistan," "received military training at an al-Qaeda-affiliated military training camp," "served as a courier for several high-ranking al-Qaeda members" and "fought against U.S. and allied forces at the battle of Tora Bora" ahead of the fall of the Taliban in 2001. The judge, however, wrote that government evidence amounted to "a mosaic of allegations." - *AFP, January 15*

January 15, 2009 (UNITED STATES): CIA Director Michael Hayden told reporters that the tribal regions in Pakistan are not as welcoming for al-Qaeda as they used to be. He said that al-Qaeda and its allies are "beginning to realize, beginning to think, this is neither safe nor a haven." - *Bloomberg, January 15*

January 15, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Two Pakistani paramilitary soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. - *AFP, January 15*

January 15, 2009 (SOMALIA): The last Ethiopian troops withdrew from Mogadishu; however, troops are expected to remain along border areas. - *Voice of America, January 15*

January 15, 2009 (PHILIPPINES): Three International Committee of the Red Cross workers were kidnapped in broad

daylight on Jolo Island in Sulu Province in the southern Philippines. The workers included a Swiss national, an Italian national and a Filipino engineer. The Abu Sayyaf Group is suspected of being behind the abduction. - *Philippine Daily Inquirer, January 16*

January 16, 2009 (UNITED STATES): The U.S. Treasury announced that it would freeze the assets of one of Usama bin Ladin's sons, Sa'ad bin Ladin, and three other al-Qaeda members believed to be operating in Iran. - *Reuters, January 16*

January 16, 2009 (UNITED STATES): Director of National Intelligence Michael McConnell told reporters that one of Usama bin Ladin's sons, Sa'ad bin Ladin, "has left Iran...He's probably in Pakistan." McConnell saw this development as encouraging, stating, "It's better for my world if any of these players are in places that we have access." - *Reuters, January 16*

January 16, 2009 (SOMALIA): The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution expressing its intention to create a UN peacekeeping force in Somalia. The resolution renewed the mandate of the African Union (AU) peacekeeping force currently deployed in Somalia for six months. It also encouraged AU states to increase the size of the deployment from the current 2,600 troops to 8,000, which was the number originally authorized. The UN peacekeeping force will not be created, however, for at least several months until the situation on the ground in Somalia can be better assessed. - *AP, January 16*

January 17, 2009 (GLOBAL): A new al-Qaeda video bearing the logo of al-Sahab was released on Islamist websites. The video addressed Germany's involvement in fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan and warned that German "soldiers are safe nowhere." According to Reuters, in the video the masked man who leveled the threats had a sign behind his head that read "Abu Talha the German" and "spoke in German with a slight foreign accent." - *Reuters, January 18*

January 17, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide car bomber exploded outside the German Embassy in Kabul, killing one U.S. soldier and two Afghans. A

number of U.S. soldiers and German nationals were wounded. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. - *Washington Post, January 18*

January 17, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani security forces raided a militant stronghold in Mohmand Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. During the attack, they killed 14 militants and lost two of their own. - *AFP, January 17; Reuters, January 18*

January 17, 2009 (PHILIPPINES): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) received "proof of life" on the three ICRC workers kidnapped by suspected Abu Sayyaf Group militants on January 15. No other details were offered. - *AP, January 17*

January 18, 2009 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber attacked and killed Hassan Zaidan al-Lihebi, a deputy leader of the Iraqi National Dialogue Front, an influential Sunni Arab political party. The attack occurred south of Mosul in northern Iraq. - *Reuters, January 18*

January 19, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide car bomb attack occurred near the gates of a U.S. forward operating base in Khost Province, killing one Afghan. A second suicide bomber waited for emergency officials to arrive, and then attempted to detonate his explosives. Police, however, detected the second bomber and he was forced to detonate his explosives early, killing only himself. - *AP, January 19*

January 19, 2009 (YEMEN): Yemen's official state news agency reported that government forces killed two suspected al-Qaeda militants and wounded a third during a raid in Sana'a. A fourth al-Qaeda member part of the cell escaped. - *Reuters, January 20*

January 20, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): General David Petraeus, the head of U.S. Central Command, said that the United States has struck deals with Russia and several Central Asian countries to let U.S. supplies pass through their territories to U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan. The deals will reduce U.S. dependence on supply routes through Pakistan, which have been increasingly interrupted in recent months. - *AP, January 21*

January 20, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani security forces killed 38 Taliban fighters during an offensive in Mohmand Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. - *Reuters, January 20*

January 20, 2009 (THAILAND): Thailand decided to extend an emergency decree in its three southern-most provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat for another three months, starting January 19. The three provinces have been plagued by a Muslim-Malay insurgency. - *Bangkok Post, January 20*

January 21, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber killed two Afghan soldiers in Herat Province. - *Reuters, January 21*

January 21, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): U.S.-led coalition forces killed six Taliban fighters during a raid in Zabul Province. - *AP, January 22*

January 21, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani security forces claimed to have killed the chief of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) for Mohmand Agency. The leader, identified as Umar Khalid, was reportedly killed with four other key militant commanders during the raid in the Lakaro area of Mohmand. The Taliban, however, denied that Umar Khalid was killed. - *Dawn, January 21*

January 21, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani forces arrested a senior Saudi al-Qa`ida operative wanted in connection with the July 7, 2005 terrorist attacks in London. Security forces arrested Zabi ul Taifi and six other suspected militants in Peshawar. - *AFP, January 21*

January 22, 2009 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida leader Abu Yahya al-Libi released a new video statement in which he called on "mujahidin all over the world [to] rise up like a raging lion" and strike at Western capitals in retaliation for Israel's recent offensive in the Gaza Strip. - *CBS News, January 22*

January 22, 2009 (UNITED STATES): President Barack Obama signed an executive order to close down the U.S. military detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. - *Guardian, January 22*

January 22, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghan troops killed eight Taliban

fighters in Khost Province. - *AP, January 22*

January 22, 2009 (MALI): Four European tourists were kidnapped by armed assailants in Mali near the Niger border. The hostages include two Swiss, one German and a Briton. A Malian military source told reporters on January 29 that al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb was most likely holding the Europeans. - *Reuters, January 29*

January 23, 2009 (YEMEN): A U.S. counterterrorism official told reporters that a Saudi militant released from Guantanamo Bay has become a leading figure in the Yemen branch of al-Qa`ida. The militant, identified as Said Ali al-Shihri, was released to Saudi authorities in 2007. - *AP, January 23*

January 23, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. missile strike killed at least five suspected militants in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Another five people were also killed. - *AP, January 23*

January 23, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. missile strike killed at least eight people in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. - *AP, January 23*

January 23, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A suicide car bomber killed two soldiers in the Swat Valley of the North-West Frontier Province. - *AP, January 23*

January 24, 2009 (IRAQ): A suicide car bomber killed at least five policemen at a checkpoint in Garma, 20 miles from Baghdad. - *Reuters, January 24*

January 24, 2009 (SOMALIA): A suicide car bomb ripped through Mogadishu, killing at least 14 civilians. The intended targets were African Union peacekeepers. - *AFP, January 24*

January 25, 2009 (SOMALIA): Ethiopia completed its withdrawal from Somalia. - *AFP, January 25*

January 26, 2009 (YEMEN): The U.S. Embassy in Sana`a released a warden's message, stating that "the U.S. embassy has received a threat against the embassy compound regarding a possible attack which could take place

in the foreseeable future. U.S. citizens in Yemen are advised to exercise caution and take prudent security measures in all areas frequented by Westerners." - *AFP, January 26*

January 26, 2009 (YEMEN): Police exchanged fire with gunmen in a car at a checkpoint near the U.S. Embassy in Sana`a. The gunmen fled the scene, and there were no injuries. The incident occurred after the U.S. Embassy released a warden's message warning that threats were made against the facility. - *AP, January 27*

January 27, 2009 (UNITED STATES): U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates told Congress that "there is little doubt that our greatest military challenge right now is Afghanistan." - *AP, January 27*

January 27, 2009 (IRAQ): A suicide car bomber killed three Iraqi soldiers in Mosul, Ninawa Province. - *AFP, January 27*

January 27, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Taliban militants destroyed a boys' school and the houses of six pro-government tribal elders in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. - *AFP, January 27*

January 27, 2009 (JORDAN): A Jordanian military court put on trial 12 men accused of conducting terrorist attacks on a Christian church and cemetery. The primary suspect, Shakir al-Khatib, allegedly received training from an al-Qa`ida operative in Lebanon, although the court is not charging him with al-Qa`ida membership. - *AP, January 27*

January 27, 2009 (YEMEN): Al-Qa`ida's factions in Yemen and Saudi Arabia announced that they are merging their operations. The deputy of the new consolidated group has been identified as Said Ali al-Shihri, who was released from Guantanamo Bay in 2007. - *al-Jazeera, January 28*

January 28, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani security forces killed 12 suspected Taliban militants in Dara Adam Khel in the North-West Frontier Province. - *AFP, January 28*

January 28, 2009 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani authorities arrested nine men suspected of involvement in the June 2, 2008 attack on the Danish Embassy in Islamabad. The men were also accused of organizing the bombing of an Italian restaurant in Islamabad in March 2008, an attack that killed one individual and injured four FBI personnel. – *AP, January 29*

January 28, 2009 (PHILIPPINES): A Philippine government official visited three International Committee of the Red Cross workers who were kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf Group on January 15. The official reported that the three workers are “in good condition.” – *Reuters, January 28*

January 29, 2009 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghanistan’s election commission announced that the country’s presidential elections will be delayed until August 20 due to logistical and security concerns. – *CNN, January 29*

January 29, 2009 (TURKEY): Turkish authorities announced that police had killed an al-Qa`ida militant who tried to rob a post office branch in Istanbul. Three other al-Qa`ida suspects were captured during the operation. – *Reuters, January 29*

January 30, 2009 (UNITED KINGDOM): Nicky Reilly, a convert to Islam, was sentenced by a UK court to life in jail with a minimum term of 18-years for his role in an attempted suicide bombing in Exeter. Reilly tried to detonate a nail bomb in a restaurant, but it exploded prematurely and he injured only himself. – *AP, January 30*

January 30, 2009 (PAKISTAN): A roadside bomb ripped through a Pakistani Army convoy in a village near the Swat Valley, resulting in the deaths of three soldiers. – *AP, January 31*

January 31, 2009 (IRAQ): Provincial elections took place in Iraq. The elections were largely peaceful. – *Bloomberg, January 31*

January 31, 2009 (SOMALIA): Shaykh Sharif Shaykh Ahmad, the former head of the Islamic Courts Union, was elected as the new president of Somalia after an all-night parliamentary session in neighboring Djibouti. Shaykh Sharif is viewed as a moderate Islamist leader. – *Reuters, January 31*