

these periods of religious excitement eventually dissipated.

The fact that al-Qa`ida is embedded in a broad movement does not make it immune to decline and defeat either. Mass protest movements typically have a beginning, middle and end. According to many of their observers, protest movements end when their “opportunity structure” narrows—that is, when the authorities become more effective in dealing with them and when the movements themselves become institutionalized as their leaders transform them into largely conventional political parties or similar organizations.<sup>15</sup> The history of the Palestinian group Fatah could serve as an example, or the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan and Egypt where they are now represented in their countries’ parliaments.

Another powerful factor possibly affecting longevity today is the impact of the internet. On the other hand, both Europe and North America abound with far right, racist and anti-Semitic groups that make extensive use of the internet in the hope of setting off a racial holy war and, in their minds, save the Aryan race from extinction. Yet despite a myriad of websites and chat rooms, no right-wing holy war appears imminent. In the absence of a critical mass of followers, the effect of the internet is distinctly limited and is a tool rather than a cause.

#### The Future of Al-Qa`ida?

When assessing the future of al-Qa`ida, no single factor seems likely to bring about its demise. It will likely take a combination of the items mentioned above. There are, however, some favorable signs. According to public opinion polls conducted by Pew and Gallup, al-Qa`ida enjoys declining levels of support among sampled respondents in the Middle East and South Asia, in Pakistan especially. Leading clerics have begun to preach that al-Qa`ida’s indiscriminate attacks against civilians, Muslims in particular, conflict with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Leadership decapitations appear to

have had some effect, rhetoric aside, in demoralizing key figures. Most of al-Qa`ida’s “nodes” in Southeast Asia, for example, have been eliminated.

None of al-Qa`ida’s ostensible goals have been achieved. Governments in Cairo, Riyadh and Amman continue to function. Jews and “Crusaders” are still present in the Middle East and elsewhere in the House of Islam. The prospects of al-Qa`ida creating a new caliphate remain in the realm of the fantastic. In short, while the end may not be near, it might not be far off either.

As a result, while no “silver bullet” will bring an end to al-Qa`ida, a combination of external pressure exerted by the relevant authorities and internal decay brought on by organizational woes should reduce the threat to a manageable level.<sup>16</sup> What particular mix of “carrots” and “sticks” is most effective is likely to vary with the different national contexts in which the various al-Qa`ida components operate. As various U.S. political leaders have pointed out, the world is simply not going to move in the direction al-Qa`ida’s luminaries wish to take it.

*Dr. Leonard Weinberg is Foundation Professor of Political Science at the University of Nevada and a senior fellow at the National Security Studies Center at the University of Haifa in Israel. He has been a Fulbright senior research fellow for Italy, a visiting scholar at UCLA, a guest professor at the University of Florence, and the recipient of an H.F. Guggenheim Foundation grant for the study of political violence. He has also served as a consultant to the United Nations Office for the Prevention of Terrorism.*

*Dr. Arie Perliger received his Ph.D. in political science at the University of Haifa in Israel, where he also taught until 2008. From 2002 to 2008, he served as a fellow at the University of Haifa’s National Security Studies Center, during which he managed the Terrorism Research Project team. In 2007, Dr. Perliger became a Golda Meir Postdoctoral Fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and currently serves as a visiting assistant professor in the Political Science Department at the State University of New York, Stony Brook.*

## Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

January 1, 2010 (DENMARK): A Somali man broke into the home of Kurt Westergaard, the Danish cartoonist whose caricature of the Prophet Muhammad was published by *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005. The Somali man, who is a Danish resident, was carrying an axe and a knife, and Danish authorities claim that he was an assassin with links to the Somali insurgent and terrorist group al-Shabab. He was shot and wounded by police before he could reach Westergaard, who was home at the time. – *The Observer, January 3; AFP, January 2; New York Times, January 3*

January 1, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle amid a crowd of spectators watching a volleyball game in Lakki Marwat District of the North-West Frontier Province. The bombing killed 101 people. – *AFP, January 3*

January 1, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A roadside bomb killed five people, including an anti-Taliban tribal elder, in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The bomb was detonated remotely. – *AFP, January 1*

January 3, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. unmanned aerial drone killed five alleged militants near Mir Ali in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *al-Jazeera, January 4*

January 6, 2010 (PAKISTAN): U.S. unmanned aerial drones targeted a Taliban training center in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing at least 13 militants. – *AFP, January 6; Washington Post, January 7*

January 6, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber killed four Pakistani soldiers in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir. – *Dawn, January 6*

January 6, 2010 (RUSSIA): A suicide bomber in a vehicle killed six police officers in Makhachkala, Dagestan. – *New York Times, January 6*

January 7, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber killed 10 people in Gardez, the capital of Paktia Province. The target of the attack, pro-government militia

*ism in American Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963).

<sup>15</sup> On the concept and theories of “Political Opportunity Structure,” see Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> For a useful review of how past terrorist groups ended, see Robert Art, “Conclusion,” in Louise Richardson ed., *Democracy and Counterterrorism* (Washington, D.C.: USIP, 2007).

commander Nasir Paray, was killed in the blast. – *New York Times*, January 7

January 8, 2010 (UNITED STATES): Two alleged associates of Najibullah Zazi, an Afghan immigrant charged with plotting a series of bombings in New York, were arrested. The two men have been identified as Zarein Ahmedzay and Adis Medunjanin. – *AFP*, January 8

January 8, 2010 (PAKISTAN): An accidental explosion killed eight suspected militants at a safe house in Karachi. Authorities suspect that the explosives—which included suicide jackets—were being stored in the building for future terrorist attacks. The safe house was located in Baldia district, an area of Karachi that is primarily home to Pashtun migrants from Pakistan's northwest. – *Wall Street Journal*, January 8

January 9, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. unmanned aerial drone killed at least four militants in Ismail Khel village, located in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. It is believed that the strike killed Jamal Saeed Abdul Rahim, wanted for his alleged role in the September 5, 1986 hijacking of Pan American World Airways Flight 73. – *AFP*, January 9; *AP*, January 15

January 10, 2010 (INDIA): Two alleged members of Lashkar-i-Tayyiba were killed by Indian Army troops in Reasi district of Indian-administered Kashmir. – *Indian Express*, January 11

January 13, 2010 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber blew up a truck outside a police station in Anbar Province, killing seven people. – *Reuters*, January 13

January 13, 2010 (YEMEN): Yemeni security forces killed a suspected al-Qa`ida leader and arrested four al-Qa`ida fighters in eastern Shabwa Province. The leader of the al-Qa`ida cell was identified as Abdullah Mehdar. – *Los Angeles Times*, January 14; *Voice of America*, January 13

January 14, 2010 (UNITED STATES): Tahawwur Hussain Rana was indicted by a U.S. grand jury for his alleged role in the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India. Rana was charged with providing material support to both the Mumbai attacks and to Lashkar-i-Tayyiba, the Pakistani terrorist group believed responsible for the operation. Rana also

faces other charges, such as conspiring to attack a Danish newspaper for publishing caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. – *National Post*, January 14

January 14, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a market in the Dehrawood district of Uruzgan Province, killing 20 civilians. – *New York Times*, January 14

January 14, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. unmanned aerial drone targeted Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan leader Hakimullah Mehsud in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Approximately 10 people were killed in the attack. It is believed that Hakimullah Mehsud eventually died from injuries sustained in the strike. – *CNN*, January 15; *CNN*, February 9; *AP*, February 10

January 14, 2010 (JORDAN): A roadside bomb exploded next to a convoy of vehicles carrying Israeli diplomats in Jordan, yet there were no injuries. – *Wall Street Journal*, January 15

January 15, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. unmanned aerial drone killed five people in Zarini village in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *CNN*, January 15

January 15, 2010 (YEMEN): Yemeni forces killed six alleged al-Qa`ida militants in an airstrike near the Saudi Arabian border. The airstrike targeted two vehicles on the border between the Yemeni provinces of Saada and al-Jawf. Authorities believe that Qasim al-Raymi, the military chief of al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula, was among the dead. – *Washington Post*, January 16; *Voice of America*, January 15

January 16, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a military vehicle in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, wounding two soldiers. – *Reuters*, January 16

January 17, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. unmanned aerial drone killed 15 people in the Shaktu area of South Waziristan Agency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The strikes targeted a compound owned by a member of the Mehsud tribe. – *New York Times*, January 17

January 18, 2010 (CANADA): Zakaria Amara, the ringleader of the so-called "Toronto 18" terrorist cell, was sentenced to life in prison. The 2006 plot involved

detonating truck bombs outside the Toronto Stock Exchange, the Toronto offices of Canada's spy agency, and an Ontario military base. The plot was disrupted by Canadian authorities. – *ABC News*, January 18

January 18, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters launched a coordinated attack in Kabul, setting off explosives and taking over buildings. Approximately 12 people were killed in the fighting, seven of whom were militants. – *Wall Street Journal*, January 18; *Los Angeles Times*, January 19

January 19, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. unmanned aerial drone killed five people in the Deegan area of North Waziristan Agency in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *AP*, January 19

January 21, 2010 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber blew up a truck near an Iraqi military base in Baaj, Ninawa Province. One Iraqi soldier was wounded. – *Reuters*, January 22

January 21, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani intelligence officials said that a U.S. unmanned aerial drone strike earlier in January killed Abdul Basit Usman, an alleged Abu Sayyaf Group demolition expert. Usman was captured by Philippine authorities in 2002, but managed to escape months later. He also was linked to Jemaah Islamiya. – *Philippine Inquirer*, January 23; *New York Times*, January 21

January 22, 2010 (IRAQ): U.S. military forces killed Abu Khalaf, identified as a senior al-Qa`ida operative and a facilitator for the transit of foreign fighters from Syria into Iraq. He was killed in Mosul, Ninawa Province. – *UPI*, January 28

January 22, 2010 (TURKEY): In a major operation involving 16 provinces, Turkish police arrested 120 people with suspected ties to al-Qa`ida. – *Guardian*, January 22

January 23, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban militants attempted to kill the governor of Wardak Province by setting off a hidden bomb as he traveled to a school building inspection. The governor escaped injury, but four of his Afghan military guards were killed. – *New York Times*, January 23

January 23, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a police station in Gomal,

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**CONTACT**

Combating Terrorism Center  
U.S. Military Academy  
607 Cullum Road, Lincoln Hall  
West Point, NY 10996  
Phone: (845) 667-6383  
Email: [sentinel@usma.edu](mailto:sentinel@usma.edu)  
Web: [www.ctc.usma.edu/sentinel/](http://www.ctc.usma.edu/sentinel/)

\* For Press Inquiries: (845) 667-6383

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located south of Tank in the North-West Frontier Province. At least five people were killed by the blast. – *RIA Novosti, January 23*

January 23, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Taliban militants killed seven Pakistani tribesmen accused of spying for the United States. The killings occurred in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *Reuters, January 24*

January 24, 2010 (GLOBAL): Usama bin Ladin purportedly released a new audiotape claiming credit for the December 25, 2009 attempted bombing of a commercial airliner in the United States. The statement read, “The message delivered to you through the plane of the heroic warrior Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab was a confirmation of the previous messages sent by the heroes of the September 11. America will never dream of security unless we will have it in reality in Palestine. God willing, our raids on you will continue as long as your support for the Israelis continues.” – *BBC, January 24; Australian, January 25*

January 25, 2010 (IRAQ): Suicide bombers attacked three landmark hotels in Baghdad near-simultaneously, killing at least 36 people. The targeted hotels include the Sheraton, the Hamra, and the Babylon. The Islamic State of Iraq later claimed credit for the bombings. – *Los Angeles Times, January 25; Voice of America, January 27*

January 26, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A bomb exploded outside the main gate at Camp Phoenix, a U.S. military base on the outskirts of Kabul. There were no confirmed reports of fatalities, although Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid claimed that the bomb killed 25 soldiers. – *CNN, January 26; New York Times, January 26*

January 26, 2010 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber in a vehicle exploded outside the Iraqi Interior Ministry's forensics department in Baghdad, killing at least 18 people. – *Christian Science Monitor, January 26*

January 27, 2010 (PAKISTAN): The body of anti-Taliban militia leader Malik Manaris Khan was found in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Khan, who was kidnapped on January 25, had been shot to death. – *AFP, January 27*

January 27, 2010 (MALAYSIA): Authorities in Malaysia announced the detention of 10 people with suspected ties to international terrorist groups, including Jemaah Islamiya. Nine of the 10 detained individuals are foreigners. – *Reuters, January 27*

January 29, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters, disguised in Afghan Army and police uniforms, launched an assault on United Nations and government buildings in Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand Province. At least five militants were killed, along with one civilian. The attack was similar to the January 18 coordinated Taliban assault in Kabul. – *al-Jazeera, January 30; New York Times, January 29*

January 29, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. unmanned aerial drone killed five suspected militants in Muhammad Khel, located in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *AFP, January 29*

January 30, 2010 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives at a restaurant in Samara, Salah al-Din Province, killing at least two people. The restaurant was reportedly popular among Iraqi police. – *Voice of America, January 30*

January 30, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber killed 16 people at a police checkpoint in Bajaur Agency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *AP, January 30*

January 30, 2010 (YEMEN): Yemeni security forces detained an alleged al-Qa`ida militant wearing an explosives belt. Authorities charge that the man was planning a suicide bombing on “economic facilities” in Hadramawt. – *Reuters, January 30*

January 31, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani forces killed 15 Taliban militants in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The fighting erupted after Taliban fighters attacked a military checkpoint and convoy. – *Reuters, February 1*