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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.

Building a Strategic U.S.-Pakistan Nuclear Relationship

By Rolf Mowatt-Larssen

Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani and U.S. President Barack Obama. - Photo by Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty Images

On April 12-13, 2010, U.S. President Barack Obama hosted the Washington Nuclear Security Summit. The final communiqué released from the summit, and agreed to by the 47 countries in attendance, stated that "nuclear terrorism is one of the most challenging threats to international security, and strong nuclear security measures are the most effective means to prevent terrorists, criminals, or other unauthorized actors from acquiring nuclear materials."[1] With this commitment, the bar has been raised for all countries to reassess their current levels of engagement with one another in an effort to achieve a greater level of nuclear security. As President Obama stated in Prague in April 2009, "one nuclear weapon exploded in one city—be it New York or Moscow, Islamabad, or Mumbai, Tokyo or Tel Aviv, Paris or Prague—could kill hundreds of thousands of people. And no matter where it happens, there is no end to what the consequences might be—for our global safety, our security, our society, our economy, to our ultimate survival."[2]

The United States and Pakistan recently initiated a promising series of high level talks to develop a strategic relationship between the two countries. Even in pursuit of such an expanded bilateral agenda, however, lowering the risks associated with Pakistan's nuclear weapons must stand at the top of the list of priorities. Indeed, a key test of whether the two countries are able to develop a genuine partnership is whether the current levels of extreme sensitivity and mutual mistrust can be reduced, if not eliminated. In

1 "Communique of Nuclear Security Summit," Associated Press, April 13, 2010.

2 John Nichols, "On Disarmament: Will Obama Make His Rhetoric Real?" *The Nation*, April 4, 2009.

turn, this might lead to a shared sense of purpose that the proliferation and terrorism risks associated with nuclear weapons can be mitigated in ways that are less opaque, yet fully respectful of Pakistan's sovereignty.

In this spirit, the nuclear-related agenda for joint cooperation should concentrate on four strategic areas of engagement: understanding the risks associated with Pakistan's nuclear weapons program; considering broader trends that could impact Pakistan's nuclear security posture negatively; strengthening communications in case of a nuclear crisis; and increasing public outreach in Pakistan that counters the mysteries surrounding cooperation in this area of great national sensitivity.

Developing a Common Understanding

Senior U.S. and Pakistani officials should develop a common understanding of the risks associated with Pakistan's growing nuclear weapons program. To put this in perspective, Pakistan's nuclear arsenal roughly doubled from 1998 to today's estimated total of 100 weapons.[3] In the coming years, as new plutonium-production capacity at the Khushab site comes online, the total amount of plutonium that could be used in nuclear weapons could increase dramatically. Using plutonium as the nuclear-explosive material will also allow Pakistan to build smaller nuclear weapons. The expansion of the weapons program will mean more material and more construction of facilities for processing material and manufacturing weapons and delivery systems.

In light of Pakistan's increasing emphasis on nuclear weapons to counter perceived threats to its security by rival India, Pakistan should continuously re-evaluate the challenges posed by nuclear terrorism and associated risks of proliferation. Closing gaps in U.S. and Pakistani perceptions of potential vulnerabilities requires a dialogue on possible terrorist pathways to a nuclear bomb. This entails regular exchanges on the nature of terrorist intent and efforts to acquire capability. It requires an active exploration for answers to associated questions, such as what steps must be taken for a terrorist group to carry out a nuclear plot? Where might terrorists seek assistance from insiders in Pakistan's establishment, or from other sources of material and expertise outside the country?

Developing a common understanding that nuclear terrorism poses real challenges to broader Pakistani and U.S. interests is a prerequisite for effective nuclear-related cooperation. In and of themselves, specific technical measures to strengthen nuclear security will fall short of their desired impact unless they are guided by an appreciation that acquiring and detonating a nuclear bomb is not beyond the grasp of al-Qa`ida or its associates.

In this regard, there is a tendency in Pakistan, as in many countries, to assume that "men in caves" are incapable of acquiring a nuclear bomb and that even if terrorists were to obtain large quantities of nuclear weapons grade material, that they would be unable to construct a functioning nuclear weapon. According to this thinking, the most a terrorist group could possibly accomplish is to produce a "dirty bomb," or radiological dispersal device. It is true that it is extremely difficult for terrorists to steal or build a nuclear weapon; however, countering nuclear terrorism effectively requires that standards for securing weapons and materials are set so high that terrorists simply cannot exploit any compromises or gaps in the defenses. Moreover, there have already been a number of Taliban attacks on Pakistani military facilities, underscoring the potential gravity of the threat.

Local Trends

From the perspective of ensuring that there is never a single lapse in security that compromises nuclear weapons or materials, Pakistani efforts to strengthen nuclear security should also consider the impact of broader trends affecting the country and region. In framing priorities for the appropriate forms of nuclear cooperation, the United States and Pakistan should assess ways in which local trends potentially exacerbate vulnerabilities in the nuclear establishment, now and in the future. The most important risk in this regard is that rising levels of extremism and instability in the country increase the risks that insiders in the Pakistani government, military or nuclear establishment will conspire with outsiders (extremists) to help provide access to weapons or materials to a terrorist group. Pakistan's authorities recognize the gravity of this problem, and are coping with it by emphasizing secrecy over the more visible manifestations of nuclear security such as the redundant and highly visible layers of high walls, gates and guards at sites that are meant to deter those seeking access.

Moreover, Pakistan's nuclear program is growing in response to perceived threats posed by India's nuclear arsenal. Pakistan is developing an increased capacity to produce smaller and more lethal weapons. There is more nuclear-related product being produced—facilities, materials, storage, and transit. Increasing nuclear activity raises risks of a single security breakdown somewhere in the system, thereby creating more opportunities for terrorists. A candid exchange of views concerning such trends would be delicate, but it is necessary to identify blind spots and anticipate vulnerabilities before they manifest themselves.

Strengthening Communications

Senior U.S. and Pakistani officials should consider innovative ways to strengthen communication mechanisms that can withstand the pressures of a prospective nuclear terrorism-related crisis. A number of possibilities must be foreseen in this regard that are ripe for joint contingency planning, such as: communications during a terrorist attack on a nuclear-related site; a potential nuclear confrontation with India; and heightened tensions subsequent to a large terrorist act occurring in either country.

Arguably, a nuclear terrorism-related incident or unfolding event would challenge the planning assumptions that rule traditional state-on-state crisis planning between India and Pakistan. It is obviously not in the interests of Pakistan, India, or the world for decision-makers to "guess" about one another's plans and intentions in the fog of an unprecedented series of events. Yet, that is a distinct possibility given the unpredictable forms that nuclear terrorism might take, combined with the understandable reluctance of bitter rivals

3 Alex Spillius, "Al-Qaeda Trying to Secure Nuclear Weapons, Says Barack Obama," *Telegraph*, April 12, 2010.

to discuss counterterrorist contingency planning with each other. In this spirit, some thought should also be given to initiating a trilateral dialogue between the United States, Pakistan and India aimed at reducing mutual suspicions and misplaced assumptions in assessing the actions and reactions that are likely to occur in a nuclear terrorism-related crisis. Such advance work could help reduce the possibility of being provoked into escalating a terrorist-inspired incident into a nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan.

If actual crisis planning proves to be unfeasible due to national security sensitivities, a less sensitive form of advance preparation could be pursued through joint war gaming of notional nuclear terrorism scenarios. Conducting high level, table-top exercises in contingencies that might threaten the interests of all parties would help enhance preparedness and predictability in decision-making.

Public Outreach

More attention should also be focused on ensuring that U.S. efforts to render assistance to Pakistan are assessed favorably not just by Pakistan's authorities, but by the Pakistani people themselves. There should be greater effort to develop a modicum of popular support in Pakistan for nuclear-related engagement with the United States. This might entail communicating some information concerning the nature of cooperation and its value in terms of Pakistani interests. It is important for Pakistanis to see with their own eyes that such cooperation is natural, and fully consistent with Pakistan's sovereignty interests. Unfortunately, casting a veil of secrecy over nuclear cooperation has the unintentional effect of cultivating destructive conspiracy theories that distort the nature of the shared interests of the United States and Pakistan to cooperate on nuclear-related matters. A minimalist approach to information sharing has encouraged sensationalist, unfounded allegations that the United States has a hidden agenda to control Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. Left unaddressed, such suspicions play into the hands of extremists who seek to stoke anti-Americanism in Pakistan. Some U.S. critics—such as radical Pakistani nuclear scientist Bashiruddin Mahmood, who met with Usama bin Ladin in Afghanistan before the 9/11 attacks to discuss the al-Qa`ida leader's interest in obtaining nuclear weapons—have made public statements suggesting that insiders in the nuclear establishment should support extremists to ensure that the United States does not one day seize Pakistan's weapons.

The only way to counter such destabilizing powers of suggestion is to establish a greater degree of U.S. credibility with the Pakistani people. This will not happen overnight. A more transparent, open, and straightforward explanation of what the two countries are doing might help reduce the influence of those who stir the pot and incite action in the support of terrorist ambitions to acquire nuclear weapons and materials. Spreading this word in Pakistan would also reinforce a broader U.S. message that sharing nuclear security best practices between states is not unusual, but is happening everywhere.

The United States is redoubling efforts to increase nuclear security collaboration worldwide. As President Barack Obama noted during his April 2009 speech in Prague, global nuclear cooperation is not only desirable, but it is our only hope if the world is to avert nuclear catastrophe. Today's age is one in which a single bomb detonated by a terrorist group in any country will impact us all.

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Beyond the Moscow Bombings: Islamic Militancy in the North Caucasus

By Christopher Swift

THE MARCH 29, 2010 ATTACK on the Moscow metro offers a compelling reminder of Russia's continuing struggle with Islamic militancy. Occurring six years after the last similar incident, the strikes at the Lubyanka and Park Kultury stations killed 40 commuters and wounded more than 100.[1] Within hours, Russian media reported eyewitness accounts describing two female suicide bombers in traditional Muslim dress. By the day's end, Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) announced that it had seized an unused explosive belt near the site of the second explosion.[2]

Speaking to reporters at the G8 ministerial on March 30, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov suggested that militants in Pakistan may have organized the bombings.[3] Foreign analysts amplified that trope, arguing that the two suicide bombers might have been part of a broader al-Qa`ida plot to destabilize the former Soviet Union.[4] Like prior terrorist incidents, the resulting speculation drew an implicit link between Russia's internal struggles and a global jihadist conspiracy. As Russian investigators traced the bombers to the North Caucasus, however, it soon became clear that Dagestan, not Pakistan, was the source of the plot.

Since the start of the second Russo-Chechen war in 1999, Russian officials have routinely characterized the North Caucasus insurgency as a front in the

1 In August 2004, a female suicide bomber and her accomplice attacked Moscow's Rizhskaya metro station, killing 10 victims and injuring 50. See Arina Borodina, "Terroristicheskaia Sekta," *Kommersant*, September 2, 2004.

2 "We know that many people there actively plot attacks, not just in Afghanistan, but also in other countries," Lavrov observed. "Sometimes the trail leads to the Caucasus." See "Moscow Subway Bombings Kill 38, Are Condemned Worldwide," RIA Novosti, March 29, 2010.

3 "Lavrov: Teraktii v Moskve mogli biit sovershenii pri podderzhke iz-za ryubzha," Vesti.ru, March 30, 2010.

4 Syed Saleem Shahzad, "Pakistan Roots to Moscow Attack?" *Asia Times Online*, March 31, 2009.

global war on terrorism. Initially, that claim diminished the conflict's indigenous dimensions by mistakenly conflating separatist rebels with al-Qa`ida. Yet during the ensuing decade, the insurgency lost many of its local characteristics. With the movement's secular wing decimated, Islamist factions gained the initiative. With the surviving factions growing weaker and less centralized, the violence spread beyond Chechnya's borders. The result was a shift from a localized nationalist struggle to an increasingly delocalized Salafist jihad.

This article examines that shift in three stages. First, it describes the role of Dagestani militants in the Moscow metro bombings. Second, it discusses the insurgency's renewed emphasis on mass casualty attacks in the Russian heartland. Third, it examines the adoption of Salafi-jihadi doctrine within the self-styled Caucasus Emirate. The article concludes by evaluating the diffusion of forces within the so-called "Caucasian Front" and the likely consequences for regional stability.

Indigenous Perpetrators

Suicide bombing has long been a prominent feature in the North Caucasus insurgency. Since 2000, women associated with that movement have staged numerous high-profile terrorist operations, including eight of the ten suicide bombings in the Russian capital.[5] In July 2003, for example, two female suicide bombers detonated explosives during an outdoor rock concert at Moscow's Tushino Airfield, killing 15 and injuring 50.[6] In December 2003, a lone attacker killed six and injured 13 in a bombing near the Kremlin.[7] In August 2004, two bombers attacked two Russian commercial aircraft after their departure from Domodedevo airport, killing 89 passengers and crew.[8]

The Moscow metro bombings perpetuate that pattern. On April 2, the Russian Anti-Terror Committee announced that Dzhanet Abdullayeva, the Park Kultury bomber, was the widow of a Dagestani insurgent killed by Russian forces in December 2009.[9] On April 6, investigators confirmed that Maryam Sharipova, the Lubyanka bomber, was the wife of Dagestani militant leader Magomedali Vagabov.[10] The revelations brought swift reprisals. On April 9, officials placed Sharipova's brother on a national wanted list.[11] Three days later, the FSB engaged Vagabov's militia in Dagestan's Karabudakhent district.[12]

Female suicide bombing is a multi-causal phenomenon. Radicalized by protracted war, the loss of close family members, or their own suffering at the hands of federal and regional security forces, many of these so-called *shahidki* (also known as "black widows") exhibited a pattern of retaliatory violence.[13] Others were coerced or kidnapped by Islamist militants.[14] Some appear to be committed militants in their own right, using suicide bombing as "a last resort against foreign military occupation."[15]

Other factors may also be at play. Since the September 2004 hostage crisis in Beslan, there have been relatively few suicide attacks on Russian civilians. The Moscow bombings reversed that trend, following a litany of recent threats promising to expand the war into the Russian heartland. The Dagestani angle is also significant. Until recently, the *shahidki* were almost exclusively Chechen. While the tactics and motives underlying prior attacks may be similar, the Moscow metro bombings involved women who were relatively insulated from the trials and tribulations of the Chechen wars. Their motivation appears more ideological than situational. Against that backdrop, the introduction of Dagestani *shahidki* and the resumption of mass casualty attacks indicate a more radicalized and regionalized insurgency.

The Caucasian Front

Statements from insurgent leaders support that conclusion. On March 31, militant commander Doku Umarov claimed personal responsibility for the Moscow metro bombings in a message posted on the Kavkaz Center website. Describing the attacks as retaliation for an alleged massacre in Chechnya, Umarov threatened a new wave of terrorist operations on Russian territory. "The war will come to your streets," he promised, "and you will feel it on your own lives and on your own skin."[16]

"This declaration underscores Umarov's evolution from rebel to jihadist. By identifying his constituency in religious rather than territorial terms, he now conceives a political future that transcends his Chechen roots."

Those statements coincided with a surge of regional violence. On March 31, a second double suicide bombing near the offices of the Russian Interior Ministry and FSB in the Dagestani city of Kizlyar killed 12 people and injured another 29.[17] On April 5, a bomber killed two police officers and injured 13 in a suicide attack on the police station in Karabulak, Ingushetia.[18] On April 10, an improvised explosive device detonated

5 Robert Pape, Lindsey O'Rourke and Jenn McDermit, "What Makes Chechen Women so Dangerous?" *New York Times*, March 30, 2010.

6 Robert W. Kurz and Charles K. Bartles, "Chechen Suicide Bombers," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 20:4 (2007).

7 "Vdova ne prikhodit odna," *Kommersant*, August 10, 2004.

8 "Russian Plane Crashes Caused by Explosives," Associated Press, August 30, 2004.

9 Clifford J. Levy and Ellen Barry, "Russia Says Suicide Bomber Was Militant's Widow," *New York Times*, April 2, 2010.

10 Clifford J. Levy, "Second Bomber in Moscow Attacks is Identified," *New York Times*, April 6, 2010.

11 Natalya Kraninova, "Bomber's Brother Sought," *Moscow Times*, April 9, 2010.

12 "FSB Reports Casualties in Operation in Dagestan," Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty, April 12, 2010.

13 Kim Murphy, "A Cult of Reluctant Killers," *Los Angeles Times*, February 4, 2004.

14 Yulia Yuzik, *Nevestii Allakah. Litsa i sudbii vsekh zhenschein-shakhidok, vzorvavshikhsya v Rossii* (Moscow: Ultra Kultura, 2003).

15 Pape, et al.

16 "Statement of the Emir of the Caucasus Emirate Doku Abu Uthman," Kavkaz TV, March 31, 2010.

17 "12 Killed in South Russia Twin Bombings Days after Moscow Attacks," RIA Novosti, March 31, 2010.

18 "At Least Two Police Authorities Die in Suicide Bomber Attack in Southern Russia," RIA Novosti, April 2, 2010.

in Nalchik, the capital of Kabardino-Balkaria, killing the head of the region's Criminal Investigation Unit.[19]

These operations follow Umarov's April 2009 decision to reconstitute the infamous Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion. Organized by Chechen field commander Shamil Basayev in 1999, the unit's use of suicide bombings, hostage seizures, and other terrorist tactics prompted its designation as a foreign terrorist organization by the United States in 2003.[20] Its tactics also drove a wedge between the insurgency's nationalist and Islamist factions, with former Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov denouncing, yet unable to deter, Basayev's growing obsession with theatrical violence.

Riyadus-Salikhin's resuscitation marks a return to the Basayev model. "Russians think the war only happens on television, somewhere far away in the Caucasus where it can't reach them," Umarov argued in 2010. "We plan to show them that the war will return to their homes."[21] It also reveals a pattern of self-justifying reasoning prominent in contemporary Salafi-jihadi thought. "For me there are no civilians in Russia," Umarov explained in a July 2009 interview, "because a genocide of our people is being carried out with their tacit consent."[22]

Delocalized Militancy

Umarov's rhetoric reflects a shift in the course and character of the North Caucasus insurgency. Following the conclusion of the first Russo-Chechen war in 1996, the region witnessed two distinct and increasingly divergent strains of Islamic militancy. The ethno-nationalist strain championed an independent and nominally secular state. Centered around Maskhadov and the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI), it largely condemned terrorist violence and sought a negotiated peace with Russia.[23] The Islamist strain pursued broader objectives. Emerging as the brainchild of Basayev and Chechen propagandist Movladi Udugov, it embraced terrorist operations in a bid to undermine Russia's political will and unify the North Caucasus under a system of Shari`a law.

Umarov's movement is now avowedly Salafist. Eschewing Maskhadov's vision, he disavowed the ChRI's ethno-nationalist objectives. Working from Udugov's template, he proclaimed a virtual "Caucasus Emirate" stretching from Dagestan in the east to Stavropol Krai in the West. Borrowing from Basayev's playbook, he presumed popular support for the war, widened the scope of potential targets, and resumed terrorist operations against Russian civilians. This Salafist influence is most evident in Umarov's evolving objectives. Unconstrained by history or geography, his aims now include a campaign to liberate "Astrakhan and the Volga lands that are now under the heel of Russian infidels."[24] This declaration underscores Umarov's evolution from rebel to jihadist. By identifying his constituency in religious rather than territorial terms, he now conceives a political future that transcends his Chechen roots.

This agenda reflects the erosion of local cultural and religious institutions. Since the late 18th century, Sufi orders have dominated fundamentalist revivals and indigenous resistance movements throughout the North Caucasus.[25] These *tariqat* played a central role in the Chechen separatist movement following the Soviet Union's collapse. As rebellion devolved into brutal protracted war, however, younger militants gradually abandoned the *tariqat* in favor of a foreign, doctrinally homogenous Salafi-jihadi ideology. This process empowered Islamist factions while transforming the separatist movement's social and political structure. Once built around the ChRI and its nascent state apparatus, the North Caucasus insurgency now implicates a continuum of loosely affiliated militant groups, or *jama`ats*, operating across the region.

Salafi-jihadi ideology binds these *jama`ats* through a shared identity and historically deterministic doctrine. By advocating a political future grounded in Islam's past, it promises an authentically Islamic alternative to faltering nationalist aspirations. By appealing to a pan-Islamic identity, it transcends ethnic, linguistic, and other parochial divisions. By articulating a worldview grounded in notions of civilizational conflict, it situates local conflicts within a broader global struggle. The results are transformative. Rather than pursuing discrete objectives in their indigenous societies, Umarov and his followers now view themselves as part of a worldwide Islamic awakening.[26]

Diffuse Challenges

Ideological uniformity does not guarantee operational cohesion, however. Despite sharing a common worldview, Umarov's movement is politically and territorially fragmented. Dagestani Salafists operate through the local Jama`at Shari`at. Insurgents in Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria formed the Ingush Jama`at and Yamuk Jama`at. Militants in North Ossetia created Kataib al-Khoul. Each of these entities operates with a high degree of local autonomy, maintaining their own subgroups and support networks. Despite their nominal fealty to Umarov's front organization, however, clear operational hierarchies are difficult to discern. The resulting movement is decentralized and diffuse. Far from being a virtual state, the Caucasus Emirate is better described as a loose confederation of militant networks sharing the same adversary and ideology.

The emirate also lacks significant manpower. According to a 2009 FSB estimate, its forces number around 480.[27] That figure indicates a substantial reduction in the size of the insurgency, particularly when compared with the

19 "Terakt v Kabirdino-Balkarii: v svoei masnine vzorvan nachalnik Upravleniya ugolovnogo roziiski MVD," Newsru.com, April 11, 2010.

20 "OON vcled za SHA vklyuchila v cpisok terrorisstticheskikh organizatsii tri chechenskikh gruppipovki," Newsru.com, March 5, 2003.

21 Ibid.

22 "'Our Possibilities Are Endless...'" *Prague Watchdog*, July 6, 2009.

23 Ilyas Akhmadov, *The Russo-Chechen Tragedy: The Way to Peace and Democracy. Conditional Independence under an International Administration* (Brussels: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, 2003).

24 "Caucasus Emirate's Emir Dokka Abu Usman: 'We will liberate the Krasnodar Territory, Astrakhan and the Volga lands...'" Kavkaz Center, March 8, 2010.

25 Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union* (London: Hurst, 1985).

26 "Interview of the Caucasus Emirate's Emir Dokka Abbu Usman," Kavkaz Center, January 16, 2010.

27 "Medvedev: FSB dolzhna sokhranit control nad Chechneii," Grani.ru, March 27, 2009.

22,000 fighters deployed by the ChRI more than a decade ago.[28] Foreign fighters are also in short supply. Since 2003, jihadist syndicates have eschewed the Caucasus in favor of more promising fronts in Afghanistan and Iraq.[29] Yet while the aggregate number of militants in the North Caucasus has decreased, the relative intensity and extensity of their operations remains relatively consistent.

This consistency reflects longstanding flaws in Russia's counterinsurgency strategy. Characterized by corrupt regional leaders, a repressive security apparatus, and two decades of protracted civil strife, conditions in the North Caucasus present fertile ground for Umarov's appeals to pan-Islamic solidarity. The operations tempo also reflects emerging recruitment patterns. Although exiled ChRI leaders such as Akhmed Zakayev have openly denounced Umarov's Salafist agenda, the Caucasian Front now attracts a new generation of Islamic militants from across the former Soviet Union.

The life and death of Said Buryatsky is a case in point. Born Aleksandr Tikhomirov in the western Siberian city of Ulan-Ude, the ethnic Buryat abandoned his region's Buddhist heritage and converted to Islam at age 15. In 2008, he joined the Caucasian Front, using videos, blogs, and other social networking media to document his experiences as a guerrilla.[30] In 2009, he helped reconstitute Riyadus-Salikhin, launching a series of suicide operations targeting Ingush President Yunus-Bek Yevkurov. By the time of his death in 2010, Buryatsky had gained international prominence as an impassioned advocate of jihad, with a following among self-identified "internet mujahidin" in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and even the West.[31]

These developments pose complex challenges for Russian officials. A diffuse insurgency is more difficult to defeat using conventional military means. A delocalized insurgency, in turn, is more likely to attract disaffected Muslims from other regions. In this sense, the decade-long devolution from *tariqat* to *jama`at* produced a movement that is more ethical than political—one preoccupied with idealized notions of violence rather than the creation of social and political institutions.

These attributes indicate chronic weakness. The Caucasian Front cannot seize and hold territory. It cannot mobilize sustained indigenous support. It cannot even articulate a coherent vision of the political future. Reduced to a self-styled virtual emirate, it lacks the attributes associated with successful insurgencies. This weakness will not translate into a more passive or quiescent adversary, however. By engaging in provocative terror, Umarov actively courts violent reprisal. The more repressive the Russian response, the more radicalized the Caucasus will become. Against this backdrop, the Moscow metro bombings suggest the same kind of "vexation and exhaustion" strategies adopted in other theaters along the *umma's* cultural and geographic periphery.[32] Unable to use force to achieve political ends, Umarov has embraced force as an end unto itself.

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28 "Federalniim cilam v. Chechne protivostoyat 22 tiic. boevikov," Cyr.ru, November 4, 1999.

29 Despite the presence of foreign fighters in the North Caucasus during the first and second Russo-Chechen wars, geographic isolation, linguistic barriers, and strong border controls limited substantial Arab infiltration. See Cerwyn Moore and Paul Tumelty, "Foreign Fighters and the Case of Chechnya: A Critical Assessment," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31:5 (2008).

30 Kevin Daniel Leahy, "Sheikh Said Buryatski and the Fresh Cult of the Suicide Bombing in the North Caucasus," *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, September 16, 2009.

31 Paul Quinn-Judge, "Russia's Terror Goes Viral," *Foreign Policy*, March 29, 2010.

32 Abu Bakr Naji, *The Management of Savagery*, translated by William McCants, Combating Terrorism Center, West Point.

After Pune, Details Emerge on the Karachi Project and its Threat to India

By Animesh Roul

THE 14 MONTHS of calm after the November 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks were shattered when militants bombed the Indian city of Pune on February 13, 2010. The attack targeted a popular German bakery located in the Koregaon Park area. The bakery is situated near a Hindu spiritual center (Osho Rajneesh) and a Jewish cultural center (the Chabbad House) that are frequented by foreigners and affluent Punekars. Seventeen people were killed in the bombing, including five foreign nationals.[1] Among the injured were Iranian, Sudanese, Taiwanese, German, Yemeni and Nepalese citizens. Forensic investigations into the incident suggest that the militants used a remotely-detonated improvised explosive device comprising a mixture of ammonium nitrate, RDX explosives and petroleum hydrocarbon oil.[2]

The bakery was likely targeted because it is located in a crowded area and more vulnerable to attack. It was a popular meeting place, and the timing of the blast coincided with the peak evening hours when foreigners and Indian visitors frequent the area. It is likely that the militants selected the bakery either due to heightened security measures at the respective spiritual and cultural centers nearby, or as a last minute change in strategy based on the size of the crowd at the restaurant.

After the attack, a flurry of conflicting reports surfaced about the terrorist groups responsible for the blast as multiple unknown groups claimed credit for the operation. Suspicion, however, remains on Pakistan-based Lashkar-i-Tayyiba (LT) and its Indian homegrown affiliate, the Indian Mujahidin (IM). Details continue to emerge suggesting that the plot may have been part of the LT's so-called "Karachi Project." The

1 "Pune Blast: Toll Rises to 17," *Outlook India*, February 17, 2010.

2 Vishwas Kothari and Asseem Shaikh, "Terror Formula: RDX, Ammonium Nitrate, Oil," Times News Network, February 17, 2010.

project entails Pakistan-based militant groups training and deploying Indian Muslims for attacks in the Indian heartland. This article provides insight into the Karachi Project, and how it possibly played a role in the Pune blast.

The Karachi Project

Information about the Karachi Project was revealed by David Coleman Headley, a Pakistani-American who in March 2010 pled guilty in the United States to terrorist offenses.[3] According to information revealed by Headley, who played a key role in the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks, the Karachi Project was reportedly conceived in 2003 after the closure of the Inter-Services Intelligence's (ISI) Forward Section 23 wing in Pakistan-administered Kashmir.[4] The Karachi Project has allegedly mobilized militant and criminal syndicates—both Pakistani and fugitive Indian nationals—as part of a new wave of proxy wars targeting Indian urban centers from Karachi. The purpose of the project is to deploy Indian Muslims to carry out attacks in India using locally available bomb material so that the attacks are not traced back to Pakistan.[5] As part of the project, discontented Muslims are recruited in India, sent to Pakistan via third-party countries, trained in military tactics, and then deployed back to India to execute attacks. Established Pakistani militant groups—such as the LT—continue to serve as the planners of these attacks, but by using Indian Muslims they are able to strike deeper into the Indian heartland. Moreover, the use of Indian citizens also helps obfuscate the role of Pakistan-based groups in the attacks.

Some recent arrests have helped shed more light on the activities of the project. The interrogations and confessions of Mohammed Abdul Khwaja (known as Amjad) and Salman Ahmed (known as Chottu) revealed detailed information on how Pakistan-based, anti-Indian terrorist cells are collaborating to attack India.[6] The arrests revealed a lethal LT-HuJI[7] and IM nexus. The goal of these cells is to attack Indian-administered Kashmir as well as the Indian heartland. Khwaja is a self-styled HuJI commander with active ties to LT, Jaysh-i-Muhammad and IM mastermind Riaz Bhatkal. Like Headley, Khwaja revealed that a number of Indian nationals are housed in Karachi and are undergoing indoctrination and training for jihadist activities in India as part of the Karachi Project.[8] Khwaja himself recruited at least 24 Muslim youth and reportedly sent them for terrorist training in Pakistan—it is not clear, however, whether his personal recruits were part of the project.[9]

Khwaja's account also matches Salman Ahmed's statements about future terrorist plots targeting India. Salman reportedly confessed that IM cadres were being used in the ISI-LT's Karachi Project.[10] According to Salman, the leaders of the project remain intent on executing bomb attacks in New Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore.[11] The cells are trained to target foreigners in these attacks.[12] Salman also said that Amir Raza Khan, one of the IM's founders, is in charge of the Karachi Project, along with senior IM operatives Riyaz Bhatkal and Iqbal Bhatkal who hold vital operational positions. The ISI also allegedly plays a role, and collaborates with the LT in supporting IM operatives.[13]

Indian authorities believe that the Pune blast was part of this project.[14] The men that Indian authorities suspect of having a direct role in the Pune attack have ties to both the LT and the IM, as well as to the Karachi Project.[15] Mohsin Ismail Chaudhary, for example, has been identified as an IM operative and a recruiter of the organization's Pune cell.[16] Indian authorities suspect that he is part of the Karachi Project and is controlling sleeper cells in Pune and other cities in Maharashtra state from his safe haven in Karachi.[17]

Another suspect in the Pune attack is Mohammed Yasin Bhatkal. Yasin is considered to be the IM's explosives expert, and authorities believe he is currently in Karachi.[18] Known to

3 David Coleman Headley was born Daood Sayed Gilani and changed his name to hide his Muslim identity. According to Headley's earlier confessions, Karachi has been a hub for anti-Indian activities spearheaded by ISI/LT elements. Being part of that larger conspiracy, Headley surveyed targets for the November 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks. He also surveyed Pune, Delhi, Goa and Mumbai for future terrorist plots. Headley visited Pune in July 2008 and March 2009. For details, see "Nine Killed, 45 Injured in Pune Terror Attack," *Hindustan Times*, February 13, 2010; "Headley Twisted Facts While Applying India Visa: Report," Rediff.com, December 8, 2009; "US Citizen David Headley Admits Role in Mumbai Attacks," BBC, March 18, 2010.

4 ISI's Forward Section 23 monitored subversive anti-India operations from Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The Forward Section 23 unit was allegedly involved in training militants and providing logistics for the proxy war against India. Under U.S. pressure, the ISI reportedly terminated its operations in 2003 by shutting down training camps and operations offices in the region. It supposedly moved its anti-India infrastructure to Karachi to continue its agenda. For details, see Syed Saleem Shahzad, "Ceasefire Will Not Hold, With Same Game, New Rules," *South Asia Tribune*, November 30-December 6, 2003.

5 Raj Narayan, "Karachi Project: A Nefarious Plan to Destabilize India," *India Syndicate*, March 28, 2010.

6 For reports on these arrests, see "Hyderabad STF Catch Was In-Charge of Terror Recruitments, Say Police," *Mid Day*, January 21, 2010; "MP ATS to Question 'IM Terrorist' Salman," Rediff.com, March 9, 2010.

7 Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islam (HuJI) was founded by Qari Saifullah Akhtar in the early 1980s. The organization has been active in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh with active support from Pakistan-based deobandi religious bodies. It carried out many attacks in India, including the March 2006 Sankatmochan Temple blast in Varanasi and the May 2007 twin blasts in Hyderabad. In March 2008, the U.S. blacklisted HuJI's Bangladesh franchise as a global terrorist organization. For details, see Ahmed Khaled, "The Biggest Militia We Know Nothing About," *Friday Times*, May 20, 2002.

8 "ISI, LeT Getting Indian Jihadis Together in Karachi for Attack," *Indian Express*, February 1, 2010.

9 Ibid.; "Khwaja Planned to Bomb IOC Depot in Hyderabad," *Express Buzz*, January 20, 2010.

10 Salman reportedly confessed during his interrogation that the IM cadres were being used for the ISI-LT's Karachi Project. See "Terror Alert Sounded in Mumbai, Bangalore and Kolkata," *Economic Times*, March 9, 2010.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Khwaja told his interrogators that his accommodation and other facilities were arranged by a "Colonel Ahmed" who had been assigned by the ISI to look after the food, accommodation and needs of militants who fled from India and were now sheltered in Karachi. See, "ISI Colonel Takes Care of Karachi Logistics," *Express Buzz*, March 12, 2010.

14 "Pune Blast Part of Lashkar's 'Karachi Project'?" Times News Network, February 15, 2010.

15 Vishwa Mohan, "IM Man's Pune Accounts Frozen," Times News Network, April 1, 2010.

16 Ibid.; "Hunt Begins for Mohsin, Missing IM Recruiter," *Indian Express*, February 15, 2010.

17 Ibid.

18 "Yasin Bhatkal is IM Bombmaker, Now in Karachi: Probe Team," *Indian Express*, February 22, 2010; "IM

intelligence agencies as "Shah Rukh," Yasin was identified as a terrorist following the September 13, 2008 blasts in New Delhi that killed 30 people.[19] Yasin and Mohsin Chaudhary are close aides of Riyaz Bhatkal and Iqbal Bhatkal, two senior IM operatives believed to be operating from Dubai and Karachi.[20]

Continued Threats to India

As details emerge about the Karachi Project, it is clear that militants inside Pakistan are posing an ongoing threat to India. Both Khwaja and Salman reportedly told their interrogators that IM operatives in Karachi were under pressure from the ISI-LT leadership to organize fresh terrorist attacks in India.[21] Like Khwaja, Salman was instructed to reactivate dormant IM cells in India.[22] As stated by an Indian intelligence official, the IM has become a potential resource base that the "LT hopes to use right from identification and reconnaissance of targets to arranging logistics for terror attacks."[23]

Shortly after the Pune attack, the Mumbai police's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) foiled another major LT-IM plot in March by arresting Abdul Latif and Riyaz Ali, who were allegedly planning to attack the headquarters of the Indian oil major ONGC, along with the bustling Mangaldas Market and Borivali's Thakkar Mall in Mumbai.[24] The subsequent probe revealed a "strategy" and "recruitment" pattern quite consistent with the Karachi Project.[25] Even though the ONGC and German Bakery plots are different, and perhaps schemed by separate terror modules, authorities believe that the ONGC conspiracy was also hatched in Karachi.[26]

Despite pressure from the United States, it does not appear that elements within Pakistan's government will completely crack down on the activities of the LT. Pakistan is already suffering from its own jihadist violence from various Pakistani Taliban groups, and it risks making more domestic enemies by turning against militant cadres focused on the country's rival, India.[27] As a result, it appears only a matter of time before the LT and IM execute another attack on the Indian homeland.

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Suspect in Pune Blast," *Telegraph* [Kolkata], April 9, 2010.

19 "Hunt Begins for Mohsin, Missing IM Recruiter." For details on the September 13, 2008 New Delhi blasts, see Rahul Tripathi, "Serial Blasts Rock Delhi; 30 Dead, 90 Injured," *Times of India*, September 14, 2008.

20 "ISI Colonel Takes Care of Karachi Logistics."

21 "Terror Alert Sounded in Mumbai, Bangalore and Kolkata."

22 Ibid.

23 "IM has 'Hostels' in Gulf, Nepal & Bangladesh Too," *Economic Times*, March 11, 2010.

24 According to the Anti-Terrorist Squad of the Mumbai police, the accused were in touch with one Karachi-based "Uncle," identified as Khan Abdul Bashir Ainul Haq Khan, a fugitive himself accused of involvement in the 1993 Mumbai serial bomb blasts case. This "Uncle" reportedly directed the two men to recruit Indian youth and arrange them to be sent to Pakistan for training and to carry out terrorist attacks in India. For details, see "Two Held for Planning Attacks in Mumbai," *Financial Express*, March 15, 2010; "Court Extends Custody of Suspects in ONGC Fire Plot," *Indian Express*, April 14, 2010.

25 "Phone Calls Made by Mumbai Terror Suspects Traced to Karachi," PTI, March 15, 2010.

26 Ibid.

27 Narayan.

Assessing the Recent Terrorist Threat to the Malacca Strait

By Peter Chalk

ON MARCH 4, 2010, NAVAL authorities issued a threat advisory of a potential terrorist plot targeting shipping interests transiting the Malacca Strait. Malaysia's navy chief, Admiral Abdul Aziz Jaafar, warned that "terrorists are targeting specific tankers in the Malacca Strait and Singapore Strait."[1] Singapore's home affairs minister, Wong Kan Seng, said, "We received intelligence from our liaison partners about this possible plot to go and attack vessels coming through Singapore waters through the Strait of Malacca."[2] The warning came on the heels of the arrests of 14 suspected terrorists at an alleged Jemaah Islamiya (JI) training camp on Indonesia's Sumatra Island, which forms the eastern boundary of the waterway.[3] The incident has heightened regional and international concerns that the Malacca Strait could become a focus of Islamist maritime terrorism.[4]

In light of these recent threats, this article examines the likelihood of sea-based extremist violence in the region, JI's capacity to operate in an offshore environment, and whether Southeast Asia is a place that al-Qa`ida would seek to exploit in terms of maritime attacks. It finds that the risk of a decisive maritime strike in the Malacca Strait is low, especially in the context of disrupting shipping interests as part of an economic war against the West.

1 Alex Kennedy, "Tankers Warned of Terror Threat in Malacca Strait," Associated Press, March 4, 2010.

2 "Singapore Raises Security Alert Levels After Malacca Strait Threat," Reuters, March 5, 2010.

3 Ibid.; "14 Suspects Charged Under Indonesia's Anti-Terror Laws," ChannelNewsAsia.com, March 4, 2010.

4 The Joint War Council of the Lloyds Market Association designated the Malacca Strait an area of Perceived Enhanced Risk in July 2005. For details, see Peter Chalk, *The Maritime Dimension of International Security* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008), p. 33; Martin Murphy, *Small Boats, Weak States, Dirty Money* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 83-84; Graham Gerard Ong-Webb, "Introduction: Southeast Asian Piracy: Research and Developments," in Graham Gerard Ong-Webb ed., *Piracy, Maritime Terrorism and Securing the Malacca Straits* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2006), p. xxxiv.

Maritime Terrorism: The Jihadist Call to Arms

In May 2009, al-Qa`ida issued a global communiqué exhorting jihadists around the world to attack strategic maritime chokepoints as part of a wider economic war against the West.[5] On the surface, this call to arms seems to have direct relevance to the Malacca Strait. This particular maritime passage is one of the most important and busiest in the world, seeing an average of 50,000 transits a year that account for around a third of the world's trade and oil shipments as well as much of its liquefied natural gas (LNG).[6] The Malacca Strait is also highly prone to congestion and bottlenecks, measuring just over 1.5 miles wide at the narrowest point.[7]

While there is little doubt concerning the economic salience of the Malacca Strait, carrying out decisive attacks against ships transiting through this corridor is somewhat more challenging than commonly portrayed. One of the most frequently postulated scenarios is that terrorists could attempt to disrupt the commercial viability of the Strait, either by detonating a hijacked oil or LNG tanker to shut down a prominent commercial terminal (such as the Port of Singapore) or by scuttling a large ship to block the through-passage of maritime traffic.[8] Although theoretically possible, realization of both attack contingencies would be difficult to achieve.

Igniting pressurized LNG or oil is technically problematic. Unless these substances vent in their liquid form and mix with air in the correct ratio, the probability of either substance fully catching fire is extremely low. Even if this did occur, the lateral force of any subsequent explosion would likely be contained by the tanker's hull, which would force the destructive energy upwards rather than outwards (thus minimizing its destructive potential).[9] Sinking a major oceangoing freighter is equally as challenging and would, at a minimum, require the perpetrating group to have ready access to a large quantity of explosives, the time and means to transport this material and the expertise to know where to place the bombs to cause a critical breach. These logistical and knowledge barriers would pose formidable barriers for a single attack—much less an assault that targeted two or three ships (which would be required to truly block the Strait).[10]

An external ramming strike using a fast inshore attack craft (FIAC) arguably represents a more realistic scenario and is certainly one that has been used in the past. Leveraging these vessels as an attack platform offers the advantages of money, deftness and surprise in that FIACs are cheap, easy to handle and anonymous enough to mingle with other maritime traffic.[11] Even an FIAC-mounted attack, however, has a questionable prospect of causing a critical breach. Indeed, as the suicide bombings against the *USS Cole* in 2000 and the *MV Limburg* in 2002 highlighted, if the site of the impact does not accord with weak points in the ship's skeletal design, it is unlikely that catastrophic damage would result.[12]

By far the most vulnerable vessel to terrorist aggression is a passenger ferry since its very purpose—to move large numbers of people as quickly and efficiently as possible—necessarily precludes the option for concerted (and some might argue even basic) security. Moreover, these ships generally sail at or above full capacity and are often characterized by certain design features (notably light flammable "outer-skins," thin hulls and open car decks that lack stabilizing bulkheads) that make them highly susceptible to flooding and sinking.[13] Nevertheless, ferries only constitute a small percentage of the maritime traffic that transits the Malacca Strait, they are generally not sizeable vessels (meaning that sinking them would be unlikely to cause a major blockage along the Strait) and their value as a strategic economic target, at least in this particular vicinity, is limited.[14]

JI and Maritime Attacks

Al-Qa`ida's May 2009 communiqué also had relevance to JI on account of the group's past links to the al-Qa`ida transnational network. These ties, however, have mostly atrophied during the last five years, and while JI was certainly prepared to accept Usama bin Ladin's past financial and operational support, the group always tended to prioritize its own local objectives over that of its erstwhile backer. Since the mid-2000s, this agenda has essentially centered on reconsolidating and building strength in Indonesia by returning the movement to its historical Darul Islam roots.[15] Executing attacks in the Malacca Strait at the behest of

5 "Maritime Terrorism in the Eyes of Al-Qaeda," International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, November 2009. The communiqué was posted in *Jihad Press*, an electronic newspaper.

6 "Country Analysis Briefs: World Oil Transit Chokepoints," U.S. Energy Information Administration, January 2008; "Singapore Warns of Threat to Tankers in Malacca Strait," BBC, March 4, 2010.

7 Ibid.; Michael Richardson, *A Time Bomb for Global Trade: Maritime-Related Terrorism in an Age of Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2004), p. 38; "Ships Collide Off Malaysia Coast," al-Jazira, August 19, 2009.

8 See, for instance, Richardson, pp. 38-45; Mansoor Ijaz, "The Maritime Threat from al-Qaeda," *Financial Times*, October 19, 2003; Jerry Frank, "Big Business Gets Political Over Rising Global Risks," Lloyds List, January 24, 2008; Murphy, *Small Boats, Weak States, Dirty Money*, p. 266; "Security Raised in Malacca Strait After Terror Warning."

9 Martin Murphy, "Maritime Terrorism: The Threat in Context," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 2006, p. 21; "Facts About LNG," Sound Energy Solutions, available online at www.soundenergysolutions.com.

10 Chalk, *The Maritime Dimension of International Security*, pp. 12, 23; Dennis Blair and Kenneth Lieberthal, "Smooth Sailing: The World's Shipping Lanes Are Safe," *Foreign Affairs* 86:3 (2007). It should also be noted that the Malacca Strait is not a truly non-substitutable waterway. Blocking the passageway would require, at most, only an extra two to three days steaming time which would not unduly impact the overall cost and transport of global freight.

11 Murphy, "Maritime Terrorism: The Threat in Context," p. 23.

12 Rupert Herbert-Burns, "Terrorism in the Early 21st Century Maritime Domain," in Joshua Ho and Catherine Zara Raymond eds., *The Best of Times, the Worst of Times: Maritime Security in the Asia-Pacific* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2005), pp. 164-165.

13 For more on the vulnerability of ferries to terrorist attacks, see Chalk, *The Maritime Dimension of International Security*, p. XX; Michael Greenberg, Peter Chalk, Henry Willis, Ivan Khilko and David Ortiz, *Maritime Terrorism. Risk and Liability* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2006).

14 Of course, this does not preclude the possibility of attacks against ferries in other parts of Southeast Asia where they are far more common and critical to the day-to-day lives of many ordinary citizens. The Philippines, for instance, has seen several attacks on these vessels, including the 2004 bombing of *SuperFerry 14*, which left 116 people dead.

15 Peter Chalk, Angel Rabasa, William Rosenau and Leanne Piggott, *The Evolving Terrorist Threat to Southeast Asia: A Net Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2009), p. 102. The basic aim of Darul Islam was to overthrow the secular Indonesian state that emerged in the wake of independence from the Netherlands and replace it with one based on the full observance of Shari`a law.

an organization based on the other side of the world would have little, if any, relevance to this strategic priority.

Just as importantly, JI has no maritime tradition, and apart from unsubstantiated allegations has never sought to extend its operational realm beyond a territorial environment. The group is not known to have any mariner human or technical skill sets at its disposal, and given its current weakened and disaggregated state would be unlikely to invest the limited resources it has in trying to develop an entirely new (and in many respects unproven) attack profile.[16]

Moreover, JI's center of gravity lies in Indonesia's Java, which is by no means contiguous to the Malacca Strait. Although commentators have claimed that the militants recently arrested in Indonesia's northern Sumatra were attending a JI training camp, no evidence has yet to surface that this was the case or, indeed, that those detained were Islamist terrorists seeking to target ships transiting the seaway.[17] The fact that Achenese Muslims, including former insurgents associated with Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, have historically (and strongly) shunned attempts by JI to gain a foothold in the region also clouds the veracity of these claims.[18]

The Malacca Strait an Unlikely Target

The Malacca Strait constitutes an important maritime corridor that presumably accords well with al-Qa`ida's purported aim to disrupt Western shipping interests. For two basic, inter-related reasons, however, the group would probably seek to realize this objective elsewhere. First, the Malacca Strait is well guarded. Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore are all fully committed to ensuring the safety of the waterway through the exchange of intelligence and the regular conduct of joint patrols and exercises.[19] Since 2005, a limited but growing regime of wider airborne surveillance has also been in place. Known as the "Eye in the Sky," the initiative includes the three littoral states in addition to Thailand and the Philippines.[20] Under the scheme, each participating country has made available two planes and commits to flying two sorties a week over the Strait—meaning that for every seven days there are at least 16 hours of continual coverage over the waterway.[21]

Second, there are other strategic chokepoints that offer a more conducive operational theater. Notable in this regard is the Gulf of Aden. Not only does this passage serve as a vital and largely non-substitutable[22] trade and energy link between the Indian Ocean and Europe, it also abuts Somalia—a state that has not seen a functioning system of governance since 1991. Moreover, there are at least two groups in this region that are well placed to hit maritime targets, both of which have stated their full allegiance to the Islamist enterprise: al-Shabab, which in 2010 for the first time announced its solidarity with Bin Ladin and readiness to stage attacks off the Horn of Africa in pursuit of his ideological and militant agenda;[23] and al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which in 2009 declared a "mast media" campaign urging Muslims to gather all relevant information on American vessels sailing near Yemen, including data on payloads, crews and how they are serviced by other states.[24]

Conclusion

Although the Malacca Strait represents a key maritime corridor and has been the focus of a number of postulated risk scenarios, the threat of a major terrorist strike appears low. The waterway is well guarded and there is currently no group in the immediate region with the necessary skills or motivation to conduct decisive operations against maritime assets. The most likely entity to attempt an attack would be al-Qa`ida, with the principal objective being to realize the movement's self-defined economic jihad against the West. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that the organization is presently working with affiliates in Southeast Asia to further this goal. Moreover, there are other theaters that offer a far more conducive environment for targeting sea-based commercial and energy assets that have critical relevance to the functioning of the contemporary global order.

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16 See, for instance, Stefan Eklof Amirell, "Political Piracy and Maritime Terrorism," in Graham Gerard Ong-Webb, *Piracy, Maritime Terrorism and Securing the Malacca Straits* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2006), pp. 58-59.

17 Personal interviews, maritime security analysts, Copenhagen, Denmark, March 2010. Thus far, no evidence has surfaced that those arrested in northern Sumatra were connected to either JI's mainstream or its so-called "pro-bombing bloc." As noted in the text, JI has consistently failed to gain a footprint in this particular region. Moreover, most of the materiel seized in the purported camp—rifles, military uniforms, propaganda leaflets and videos of the 2002 Bali suicide bombings—strongly suggest preparations for a land-based attack as opposed to one aimed against maritime conveyance.

18 See, for instance, Leonard Sebastian, "The Indonesian Dilemma: How to Participate in the War on Terror Without Becoming a National Security State," in Kumar Ramakrishna ed., *After Bali: The Threat of Terrorism in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2004).

19 The effectiveness of these measures has been reflected in the dramatic drop of piracy incidents reported in the Malacca Strait. According to statistics from the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), attacks have declined by roughly 83% during the past four years. See "Armed Robbery and Piracy Against Ships: Annual Report, 2009," International Maritime Bureau, 2010, p. 5.

20 The three littoral states are Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore.

21 Personal interview, maritime security specialists attending the "Comprehensive Responses to Terrorism Conference," Cambodia, August 2009. Also see Ong-Webb, "Introduction," pp. xxix-xxxi; Mohd Nasir Yusoff, "Eye-in-the-Sky-Initiative Over Malacca Straits from September 13," Bernama, September 8, 2005.

22 In this respect, the Gulf of Aden offers a more attractive operational theater for carrying out terrorist attacks designed to disrupt the mechanics of global trade. If ships were precluded from transiting the waterway, they would be forced to re-route around the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa. This would add at least three weeks to an average journey, resulting in increased shipping costs of between $1.5 and $2 million to cover extra fuel, labor and time.

23 Huma Yusuf, "Somali Militant Group Al Shabab Aligns with Al-Qaeda," *Christian Science Monitor*, February 10, 2010.

24 "Q&A: Yemen's al-Qaeda Wing Gains Global Notoriety," Reuters, January 13, 2010; Bill Gertz, "Navy Warns Ships About Al Qaeda Risk Near Yemen," *Washington Times*, March 23, 2010.

The Philippines Chips Away at the Abu Sayyaf Group's Strength

By Zachary Abuza

SINCE THE LAUNCH of Operation Ultimatum in August 2006, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) have scored significant victories against the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).[1] In the past four months, there has been a renewed intensity against the ASG. In mid-March 2010, Philippine President Maria Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo dispatched 700 additional Philippine Marines and Ranger Scouts as well as a naval task force to the Sulu archipelago to reinforce the existing deployments. Although the ASG's capabilities and resources have waned, it has nonetheless regained a foothold in Basilan and on the Zamboanga peninsula in addition to their stronghold in Sulu. The ASG's coordinated April 13, 2010 raid on Isabela City, the capital of Basilan, that left 11 dead affirmed that the ASG remains a threat to Philippine peace and security. This article traces the evolution of the ASG, shows how the group remains a weakened organization, identifies its current leadership and finally examines some of its losses on the international front.

Evolution of the ASG

The Abu Sayyaf Group was founded by Abdurajak Janjalani, a veteran of the Afghan mujahidin, in 1991, allegedly with al-Qa`ida seed money. From 1991-1996, the group's operations were sectarian in focus, targeting Christian churches, missionaries and priests. Following the loss of support from al-Qa`ida in 1995—when Muhammad Jamal Khalifah was not allowed to return to the Philippines following his implication in Ramzi Yousef's Operation Bojinka plot to destroy multiple commercial airliners—and the 1998 killing of Janjalani in a shootout with police, the group degenerated into a kidnap-for-ransom gang, gaining notoriety for brazen raids on Philippine and Malaysian dive resorts and the taking of Western hostages.[2] These included the April 2000 raid on the Malaysian island of Sipadan, and the May 2001 raid on the Philippine resort island of Palawan; together, the two attacks netted approximately 50 foreign hostages.[3] Between 2000 and 2001, the ASG abducted approximately 140 hostages including school children, teachers, priests and Western tourists; 16 of those hostages were killed.[4]

Bolstered by U.S. training and assistance, the AFP scored some early successes, including the neutralization of ASG leaders Abu Sabaya and Ghalib Andang.[5] By 2004, however, most kidnappings had ceased, and in conjunction with members of the Indonesian-based terrorist organization Jemaah Islamiya (JI), the group was once again involved in terrorism, including the February 2004 bombing of a Superferry in Manila harbor that killed 116 people.[6] Between 2004 and 2007, the few kidnappings resulted in executions, not ransoms, including the 2007 beheadings of six workers in Jolo who were working on a U.S.-funded road project.[7]

Before 2004, the ASG had few contacts with other militant groups in the region and in the Philippines. That began to change in 2003, when Indonesian and Malaysian militants sought ASG assistance in crossing the Sulu archipelago into Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) camps in Mindanao. By 2004, JI members were embedded with ASG units. While the MILF stated that they had no ties to the ASG, arguing that the ASG's campaigns of kidnapping were "un-Islamic," the MILF worked closely with the ASG, employing them in bombing campaigns to give the MILF a degree of plausible deniability.[8] More importantly, ties to the ASG gave the MILF a beachhead in the Tausig-dominated Sulu archipelago and began to undermine the Moro National Liberation Front's (MNLF) hold in the region. Although the MILF remains overwhelmingly an ethnic Maguindanao and Maranao organization, it always sought to challenge its rival Tausig-dominated organization.

Re-Degeneration

The sustained AFP offensive against the ASG that began in August 2006 led to the death of the group's commander, Khadaffy Janjalani (the founder's younger brother) in September 2006 and then Abu Solaiman[9] in January 2007. The ASG never recovered from the losses of Janjalani and Solaiman. Although the ASG was bolstered by an infusion of new combatants when disaffected members of the MNLF, under the leadership of Habier Malik, joined with the ASG in March 2007, any cohesion that the ASG was starting to display started to unravel. Spread across the Sulu archipelago from Zamboanga to Tawi-Tawi, the ASG broke down once again into autonomous units with no noticeable central command and control. Short on funds and leadership, the individual units reverted to kidnapping for ransom beginning in the second half of 2007. The year 2008 saw more than 55 kidnappings, most of which resulted in releases after ransoms were paid.[10]

The rate of kidnappings declined to roughly 40 people in 2009.[11] Nevertheless, four people were beheaded when ransoms were not paid. The second half of 2009 saw an uptick in bombings. There were nine bombings, including one in Zamboanga that killed six, and a bombing in Jolo that killed two U.S. military personnel.[12] In

1 A number of the ASG's top commanders have been neutralized as a result of the operation. Operation Ultimatum began on August 1, 2006, after previous offensives lost intensity, and the ASG began to regroup in sizeable numbers. The offensive was unprecedented in its immediate success and the AFP's ability to sustain it over an extended period of time.

2 For details on Operation Bojinka, see Raymond Bonner and Benjamin Weiser, "Echoes of Early Design to Use Chemicals to Blow Up Airliners," *New York Times*, August 11, 2006.

3 "Abu Sayyaf Kidnappings, Bombings and Other Attacks," GMANews.tv, August 23, 2007.

4 These figures are drawn from the author's own research.

5 Sabaya and Andang were two of the most notorious kidnappers in the late 1990s, responsible for the Sipidan and Palawan raids.

6 Simon Elegant, "The Return of Abu Sayyaf," *Time Magazine*, August 23, 2004.

7 Paul Alexander, "Philippine Army Vowed to Crash Abu Sayyaf Militants after Beheadings," Associated Press, April 20, 2007.

8 Zachary Abuza, "Balik Terrorism: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf Group," Institute for Security Studies Monograph No. 625, September 2005.

9 Jainal Antel Sali (also known as Abu Solaiman) was killed in January 2007. He was one of the top military commanders for the ASG.

10 These figures are drawn from the author's own research.

11 Ibid.

12 For details on the deaths of the two U.S. soldiers, see "2 U.S. Soldiers Killed in Philippines Bomb Blast," CNN,

addition, 12 bombs were found hidden on a ferry in July 2009, indicating the ASG's continued interest in crippling the country's maritime infrastructure.[13] Perhaps the only reason that more bombings did not occur was a result of the government's April 2009 seizure of an enormous cache of bomb-making materials.[14]

The first quarter of 2010 has likewise seen a precipitous drop in kidnappings and bombings.[15] In part, these declines can be explained by more frequent and costly encounters with the AFP.

Current Leadership

On February 21, 2010, the most notorious ASG leader still at large, Albader Parad, was killed in an encounter in Sulu.[16] It was the most recent setback to the group's leadership continuity. As Philippine Lieutenant General Ben Dolorfino explained, "This will be a big blow to the Abu Sayyaf."[17] The most senior ASG commander, the one-armed Radullan Sahiron, has not been seen since a 2008 encounter, in which the AFP claimed to have wounded him. Other Jolo-based commanders include Umbra Jumandail, known as Dr. Abu Pula, and Isnilon Hapilon.

Philippine military and intelligence sources indicate that Khair Mundus has emerged as the leader of the Basilan-based ASG faction. Mundus was arrested by Philippine authorities in 2004 for his role in funneling foreign donations to the ASG and the MILF, but he escaped from a jail in 2007. Authorities are concerned that he continues to maintain ties to foreign donors in the Middle East as well as in Malaysia.[18] Beneath Mundus is his deputy, Puruji Indama, a young commander implicated in the beheadings of 10 Marines in July 2007 and the February 2010 massacre of civilians on Basilan.[19]

Philippine authorities seem buoyed by the death of Parad and the dearth of known leaders or authority figures. "There are no young leaders emerging," Dolorfino assured.[20] Another military leader contended that all command and control had broken down. "There is no such coordination among all the groups," explained Marine commandant Major General Juancho Sabban. "The Basilan group has no contact with the Sulu group or with the Tawi-Tawi group. In effect, we have isolated each group and eventually piece by piece we will be able to neutralize these groups."[21]

In addition to killing Albadar Parad, Philippine authorities have arrested a number of other militants, either ASG or people affiliated with the Indonesian-based JI. In early March 2010, authorities arrested three people in metro Manila for plotting a bombing for the ASG.[22] Bomb-making materials including detonating cords and blasting caps were recovered in the raid.[23] Raids in March against two jungle camps led to seizures of bomb-making materials, as well as the deaths of 13 ASG militants. In recent months, Philippine authorities have captured a number of ASG militants linked to the spectacular kidnappings of 2000-2001.[24]

There have also been some setbacks. In December 2009, a jailbreak on Basilan led to 31 ASG and MILF members escaping.[25] On February 26, 2010, ASG gunmen attacked the town of Maluso on Basilan Island, killing a militiaman and 10 civilians.[26] The recent April 13 assault on the Christian-majority capital city of Basilan, Isabela, was well-coordinated, and exposed significant weaknesses among government forces.[27] A small team of ASG disguised as soldiers was able to detonate three bombs in the city, followed by automatic weapons fire. The attack left 11 dead, including three marines.[28]

Regardless of these setbacks, the ASG appears weakened by the government's renewed offensives and leadership decapitations.

The International Front

While the ASG is clearly weakened at home, there have been other developments on the international front that are harder to evaluate in terms of the significance for the ASG's capabilities.

On January 14, 2010, Pakistan authorities announced that Abdulbasit Usman was killed in a U.S. drone attack in Waziristan along the Afghan-Pakistan border.[29] The attack on a compound used by Haqqani network extremists left 11 others of various nationalities dead.[30] If true, it would be a significant killing. Usman's affiliations are often disputed. He has been alleged to have been a member of the MILF, the terrorist group JI, the ASG, or as an independent gun for hire. There has never been consensus, but what is clear is that he worked at times as a bomber and trainer for both the ASG and MILF, although the latter insists that he was expelled from the group. Regardless of his affiliation, how and why a man responsible for a string of bombings in the southern Philippines went to Pakistan is unclear. It is not known whether he was sent for advanced training in bomb-making, if he was training other Southeast Asians in

October 2, 2009.

13 Arnell Ozaeta, "12 Bombs Found on Lucena Ferry," *Philippine Star*, July 27, 2009.

14 The materiel included 700 kilograms of ammonium nitrate, 8,000 blasting caps, and 13 rolls of detonating cord. For details, see "Philippine Troops Seize Large Amount of Explosives," Associated Press, April 23, 2009.

15 The abduction of an elderly Swiss man on April 4 was an exception. For details, see Jocelyn Uy and Julie Alipala, "Swiss-Filipino Kidnap Pinned on Abu Sayyaf," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, April 6, 2010.

16 Simon Montlake, "Philippines Kills Abu Sayyaf Most-Wanted Albader Parad," *Christian Science Monitor*, February 22, 2010.

17 "AFP Expects New Abu Sayyaf Leader to Emerge," GMANews.tv, February 23, 2010.

18 "Militant with Money Links Leads Abu Sayyaf Faction," Associated Press, March 14, 2010.

19 "Philippine Raid Leaves Several Dead," al-Jazira, February 27, 2010.

20 "Parad's Killing Cripples Abu Sayyaf–AFP General," GMANews.tv, February 22, 2010.

21 "Military Sees Advances vs Terror Group," ABS-CBN, March 2, 2010.

22 "3 Suspected Abu Sayyaf Bombers Arrested in Taguig," GMANews.tv, March 3, 2010.

23 Ibid.

24 These include Rasul Barro, Jumadail Arad (known as Abu Hurayra), Mubin Sakandal and Mujibar Alih Amon.

25 "Islamists Flee Philippines Prison After Militants' Raid," BBC, December 13, 2009.

26 Cecilia Yap and Katrina Nicholas, "Abu Sayyaf Attacks Southern Philippine Town, Kills 11," Bloomberg, February 26, 2010.

27 "Clashes Kill 12 in Philippines," Associated Press, April 14, 2010; "Behind the Raid," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, April 16, 2010.

28 Jim Gomez, "Filipino Troops Chase Militants After Deadly Raid," Associated Press, April 14, 2010.

29 "Filipino Bomb Expert Killed by American Missile in Pakistan," GMANews.tv, January 21, 2010.

30 Ibid.

Afghan or Pakistani camps, or whether he was simply trying to re-energize links between South and Southeast Asian militant groups.

Moreover, it is not even clear whether Usman was killed in the strike. One senior Philippine military commander, citing interrogations of three militant suspects arrested on March 3, asserted that Usman was still in Mindanao, and that Pakistan's authorities had recovered the body of another Southeast Asian.[31]

The second development was the March 9, 2010 death of Dulmatin, an Indonesian member of JI, killed in a shootout in a Jakarta internet cafe.[32] Dulmatin, who was wanted for his role in the 2002 Bali bombing that killed 202 people, arrived in the southern Philippines in 2003. He and compatriot Umar Patek were given sanctuary in MILF camps until late 2004 when their presence was impacting the MILF's peace talks with the government and bringing to light the MILF's continued ties with JI. The two were forced out of MILF territory and sought refuge with the ASG in Sulu.

"Weakened and leaderless, the ASG has re-degenerated back into a kidnapping for ransom gang, with only occasional forays into jihadist violence. Nevertheless, the group cannot be discounted as a threat."

It is not clear when Dulmatin—and possibly Umar Patek—slipped back into Indonesia. Indonesian counterterrorism police learned of their presence following a February 22 raid of a terrorist training camp in the western-most province of Aceh. There is some speculation that Dulmatin's return was necessitated by the September 2009 death of JI's Noordin Mohamed Top, which created a leadership vacuum, especially among the hard line faction that articulates a strategy focused on Western targets. Noordin Top had established a breakaway group, al-Qa`ida in the Malay Archipelago, to signal his dissatisfaction of the proponents within JI of a strategy of sectarian bloodletting. The training camp in Aceh was ostensibly run by "al-Qa`ida in Aceh," and in a recruitment video put online, the members actually denigrate JI leaders as being too moderate.[33] The Afghan-trained Dulmatin, who had front line experience in the southern Philippines against the U.S. military, was an obvious choice to succeed Noordin Mohamed Top. Again, there is no hard evidence that Umar Patek, another veteran of the Afghan jihad, is in Indonesia, but there is considerable suspicion that he accompanied his compatriot to fill the leadership void.

There is an important logic to this. For JI/al-Qa`ida in the Malay Archipelago or al-Qa`ida in Aceh to regroup, it is essential that they have leaders with the pedestal of having "joined the caravan" in Afghanistan, personal contacts with militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the trust and the respect of South Asians and Arab militants who tend to be condescending toward Southeast Asian Muslims. Ties to militant groups in South Asia also open new channels of funding to the Southeast Asian organizations, and on occasion offer new training possibilities.[34]

The third international development involves an Indonesian national, Sanusi, believed to be a JI trainer of the MILF and ASG. In mid-March, Indonesia formally requested that Philippine authorities track down Sanusi who was implicated in sectarian violence in Poso, Sulawesi, including the beheadings of three schoolgirls in 2007.[35] Philippine intelligence officials believe that Sanusi has emerged as one of the leaders of JI in the southern Philippines, along with Malaysian national Zulkifli bin-Hir (known as Marwan). The continued operational inter-connectedness of JI, ASG and the MILF continues to pose analytical questions.

Conclusion

The Philippine military is lodging successes against the ASG. Weakened and leaderless, the ASG has re-degenerated back into a kidnapping for ransom gang, with only occasional forays into jihadist violence. Nevertheless, the group cannot be discounted as a threat. The Philippine military does not appear to have the capacity nor the will to finish the job militarily, and the government's refusal to develop a holistic peace process in the southern Philippines that has full support from both the MILF and MNLF will continue to support the ASG's ranks. MILF commanders in Basilan, in particular, continue to operate alongside ASG units, while disaffected ethnic Tausigs, once loyal to the MNLF, are joining the ASG, giving them a continued lease on life.[36] Regardless of the outcome of the May 2010 presidential election, it will be at least a year before the new president is able to restart the peace process in earnest, fueling continued Muslim resentment toward Manila. Sadly, the presidential candidates have not shown much willingness to resolve the conflicts in Mindanao nor have they offered an indication that they will put forward bold new policies to rekindle the peace process.

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31 "Basit Usman Alive, Hiding in Mindanao," ABS-CBN, March 5, 2010.

32 Sara Schonhardt, "Indonesia Says Killed Leading Militant Dulmatin," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 10, 2010.

33 Niniek Karmini and Chris Brummitt, "Indonesian Militants Recruit Fighters in Video," Associated Press, March 16, 2010.

34 See, for example, Chris Brummitt, "Web Chats Point to al-Qaida's Indonesian Links," Associated Press, April 5, 2010.

35 "Philippine Hunts Indonesian Training Militants," GMANews.tv, March 20, 2010.

36 Julie Alipala and Christine Avendaño, "14 Marines Killed; 10 Were Beheaded: MILF, Abu Join Forces in Basilan Ambush," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 12, 2007.

Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb: A Case Study in the Opportunism of Global Jihad

By Jean-Pierre Filiu

AL-QA`IDA IN THE Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is not only one of the latest offshoots of Usama bin Ladin's terrorist network, but it is the branch of the global jihad that has most clearly failed to follow its founding guidelines.[1] Launched as a jihadist platform to unify North African militant groups, it has not succeeded in attracting Moroccan and Tunisian cells, and it remains an Algerian-run organization. Hailed as al-Qa`ida's spearhead against Europe, it has proved unable to strike France or Spain. It has had to rely mainly on the internet to recruit north of the Mediterranean Sea.

Conceived as a vanguard to push global jihad north into "the land of the infidels," it instead placed increasing emphasis on its Saharan component to the point that it is now involved in Mali and Niger. This failure makes AQIM a fascinating case to reflect upon the tactical opportunism and the operational reassessment of the global jihad.

The Delusion of the "Islamic Maghreb"

Algeria's Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) emerged in 1998 after splintering from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). Although deeply rooted in the complex history of the "black decade" of the 1990s, the GSPC tried since 2004 to distance itself from the heavy legacy of the Algerian civil war and, under the leadership of Abdelmalek Droukdel (also known as Abu Mus`ab `Abd al-Wadud), worked hard to join the global arena. The GSPC's 2007 merger into al-Qa`ida was meant to crown this process by assigning to the former GSPC a new horizon, the "Islamic Maghreb." This marked a dramatic challenge to the North African regimes that have failed to push forward the "Arab Maghreb" for the past 20 years.[2]

Three years later, the GSPC's Algerian hierarchy remains forcefully in charge of AQIM. Non-Algerian activists have not been promoted to the top layer of the group. In Morocco[3] and Tunisia, the jihadist militants who might have been tempted to join AQIM chose to keep their independence, while some Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) members decided to join the FATA-based al-Qa`ida central instead, turning their back on the "Islamic Maghreb." Non-Algerians were admitted into AQIM on an individual basis, with the exception of a Libyan cell that rose outside of the LIFG and was smuggled into eastern Algeria.[4] Moreover, this Libyan cell was reined in by AQIM, which did not dare expand its violence into the neighboring Jamahiriyya (Libya), probably out of fear of outstretching its already loose chain of command, but also so as not to repeat in Libya the fiasco of the jihadist cell crushed in the suburbs of Tunis in December 2006.[5]

Therefore, the only North African country where AQIM kept a high profile outside of Algeria became Mauritania. Yet Algerian jihadists already had a long record of involvement in Mauritania, where the Algerian Mokhtar Belmokhtar and his brigade (*katiba*) had provoked the local security forces as early as 2005.[6] The "Islamic Maghreb" that al-Qa`ida central envisioned while endorsing the GSPC was certainly not limited to Algeria and Mauritania. As a result, the North African grand design collapsed primarily under the enduring weight of Algerian chauvinism, still vibrant under its jihadist discourse, and potentially repulsive for Moroccan and Tunisian activists.

The Mediterranean Wall

Even before transforming his GSPC into AQIM, Droukdel repeatedly accused France and Spain of waging a full-fledged "crusade" in North Africa and threatened to strike back at the European "oppressors."[7] Al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri echoed those threats when he welcomed the GSPC into al-Qa`ida.[8] The anti-U.S. jihad in Iraq had triggered in 2003-2006 a triangular dynamic between Europe-based activists,[9] al-Qa`ida operatives in the Middle East, and the GSPC as a regional hub for potential "volunteers." As a result, al-Qa`ida's top leadership bet on AQIM to use this Iraqi trend to launch a new wave of terrorism on European soil. Yet the crisis and decline of al-Qa`ida in Iraq since 2007 jeopardized this triangular momentum, and the nascent AQIM could no longer rely on the clarion call for jihad in Iraq to recruit and plot in Europe.

In his July 2008 interview to the *New York Times*, Droukdel pledged to "liberate the Islamic Maghreb from the sons of France and Spain and from all symbols of treason and employment for the outsiders, and protect it from the foreign greed and the Crusaders' hegemony."[10] This was a defiant way to admit that the focus of anti-Western terror would be in the Maghreb itself, and not in Europe, contrary to what al-Qa`ida central had initially hoped. Therefore, AQIM started to strike "global" targets in its local environment, murdering four French tourists in eastern Mauritania in December 2007, then a French engineer in central Algeria in June 2008.[11] Later, when al-Zawahiri warned on August 5, 2009 that "France will pay for all her crimes," AQIM reacted by a suicide attack against the French Embassy in Nouakchott three days later.[12]

1 AQIM was established in January 2007, and it was the result of a merger between the GSPC and al-Qa`ida.

2 The Union for the Arab Maghreb (*Union du Maghreb Arabe*) was established in 1989 among Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya.

3 Carlos Echeverria Jesus, "The Current State of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group," *CTC Sentinel* 2:3 (2009).

4 For instance, in August 2007 four Libyan fighters were killed by the security forces south of Tebessa. For details, see Anneli Botha, *Terrorism in the Maghreb* (Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies, 2008), p. 49.

5 Ridha Kéfi, "Le Maghreb face à la pieuvre jihadiste," Afkar/Idées n°14, summer 2007, pp. 50-53.

6 This brigade switched from the GIA to the GSPC in 2000.

7 *Le Monde*, June 26, 2005; *Le Monde*, September 29, 2005.

8 Jean-Pierre Filiu, "Local and Global Jihad: Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghrib," *Middle East Journal* 63:2 (2009): p. 223.

9 For the case of Spain, see Javier Jordan, "Anatomy of Spain's 28 Disrupted Networks," *CTC Sentinel* 1:11 (2008).

10 "An Interview with Abdelmalek Droukdal," *New York Times*, July 1, 2008.

11 For details on these incidents, see "Travel Warning," U.S. Department of State, December 2, 2009; "Deadly Bombings Hit Algerian Town," BBC, August 20, 2008.

12 For the English transcript of this August 5, 2009 al-Zawahiri speech, see www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/nefa_zawahiri0809.pdf.

The inability to strike European targets on European soil is deeply frustrating for Droukdel and his followers, who invested significantly in the internet to get their message across the Mediterranean. Cyber-jihad, enhanced by the global exposure the integration into al-Qa`ida granted to the former GSPC, remains the trump card for AQIM to regain a foothold in Europe. Thus far, however, international cooperation and enhanced security awareness have managed to thwart this move. In December 2008, for example, a Paris court sentenced Kamel Bouchentouf—a longtime resident of the French city of Nancy—to six years in jail after he admitted corresponding with Salah Gasmi, the AQIM's propaganda leader, via e-mail.[13] Yet the internet, regardless of how nefarious it can become in the hands of jihadist recruiters, is a poor substitute to physical infiltration and individual radicalization on European soil. As a result, instead of projecting its terror northward, AQIM resigned to direct its violence more and more southward.

The Mirages of the Sahara

The southern faction of AQIM was initially a sideshow in the overall planning of the organization, but it steadily gained weight and visibility due to a multi-fold set of inter-related factors: the steady decline of jihadist violence in Algeria and the containment of the bulk of AQIM activity in its stronghold of Kabylie, east of Algiers;[14] the pressing needs of AQIM's leadership, who suffered the shrinking of their extortion outreach and demanded a growing contribution from their Saharan affiliates; and the deepening cooperation between those affiliates and the various smuggling networks, involved in drugs, weapons or illegal immigration.

This cumulating process played in the hands of Belmokhtar, especially when the abduction of Western nationals in the Sahara—and the subsequent ransoms paid for their release—became crucial to financing the whole AQIM apparatus. Droukdel sought to balance Belmokhtar's rising power by promoting Hamidu Abu Zeid,[15] whose neighboring *katiba* kidnapped two Austrian tourists in southern Tunisia in February 2008 and two Canadian UN diplomats in northern Niger in December 2008.[16] While Belmokhtar's focus on Mauritania meant Mali had to be preserved as a safe haven, Abu Zeid spoiled his rival's position by moving aggressively into northern Mali.[17] The violent clashes in the beginning of July 2009 opened a new period of turmoil in the central Sahara and eventually spilled into Niger. The competition between the two *katiba* also involved their partners in criminal activities; Belmokhtar and Abu Zeid reportedly asked their respective contacts to deliver them Western hostages, which led in a few weeks in late 2009 to the abduction of three Spaniards, two Italians and one French national.[18]

"The crisis and decline of al-Qa`ida in Iraq since 2007 jeopardized this triangular momentum, and the nascent AQIM could no longer rely on the clarion call for jihad in Iraq to recruit and plot in Europe."

Despite these turf wars, Droukdel still manages to maintain authority over AQIM, and he was greatly seconded in that regard by his deputy in southern Algeria, Yahya Djouadi, who oversees Belmokhtar as well as Abu Zeid. Yet the contradiction is now open between al-Qa`ida central and AQIM on the issue of kidnapping Western nationals. In only one instance, al-Qa`ida central managed to pressure AQIM into executing one of the hostages, a British tourist, in May 2009, and even in that case AQIM did not give the killing Zarqawi-like publicity.[19] AQIM prefers to trade its captives for undisclosed ransoms or the release of jailed operatives. Now that kidnapping has become the most visible sign of jihadist activity in the Sahara, AQIM is striving to maximize its local benefits even at the cost of clashing with al-Qa`ida central's global agenda.

Conclusion

In the course of its first three years of existence, AQIM has turned away from al-Qa`ida central's main expectations of the group. AQIM has failed to integrate non-Algerian factions into a truly Maghrebi organization and it has contained its terror to the southern shore of the Mediterranean. Al-Qa`ida as a whole is working hard to live up to its "global" commitment to fight the "far enemy," but its violence mostly targets fellow Muslims killed on Muslim lands. Furthermore, AQIM, unable to regain the initiative against the Algerian security forces, was forced to enhance its profile in the open spaces of the Sahara.

The sad irony, however, is that AQIM's frustrating move southward is opening for al-Qa`ida new opportunities that were not taken into consideration when the GSPC joined the global jihad. The competition between the two AQIM field commanders in the Sahara has led to the recent recruiting of new members originating from countries such as Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and even Nigeria. The numbers are too limited to speak about a significant breakthrough, but al-Qa`ida central could ultimately benefit from this development that none of its leaders foresaw when deciding to launch AQIM. This would then be a puzzling demonstration of the successful opportunism of the global jihad.

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13 Isabelle Mandraud, "Frère Abou Zhara, apprenti jihadiste ou infiltré de la DST," *Le Monde*, December 19, 2008.

14 Hanna Rogan, "Violent Trends in Algeria Since 9/11," *CTC Sentinel* 1:12 (2008).

15 Hamidu (Abdel Hamid) Abu Zeid, born in 1965, is slightly older than Droukdel and Belmokhtar, but he was only a junior commander until 2004 when he replaced "al-Para" as the GSPC's leader for southeastern Algeria.

16 "Al-Qaeda Claims Austrian Hostages," BBC, March 10, 2008; Steven Edwards and Glen McGregor, "Canadian Diplomats Missing, Feared Kidnapped in Niger," Canwest News Service, December 15, 2008.

17 On June 11, 2009, some of Abu Zeid's followers killed a senior intelligence officer in Timbuktu.

18 The French national was released in February 2010, and shortly after one of the Spanish detainees was released. The Italian couple was recently set free in April.

19 Ignacio Cembrero, "Cautivos de Al-Qaeda," *El Pais*, January 10, 2010.

No Silver Bullets: Explaining Research on How Terrorism Ends

By Audrey Kurth Cronin

THINKING ABOUT HOW terrorist groups end provides fresh strategic perspective on the fight against al-Qa`ida and its allies. It yields insight into the common patterns, tendencies, and vulnerabilities of terrorist campaigns, as there is much to learn from the history of how and why groups have failed. With an understanding of classic patterns, strategists can distinguish actions that move the process along from those that do not. Since the conflict is dynamic, envisioning the end offers a fresh mental framework both for the enemy's actions and for the actions of the United States and its allies. Americans have painfully learned that states cannot win a war without winning the peace—or at least formulating a clear concept of what "peace" means. It follows that the best way to meet the current threat is to look beyond the international terrorist campaign inspired by al-Qa`ida, beyond the war in Afghanistan, to a broader vision of how this conflict will end.

A recent article in the *CTC Sentinel* by Leonard Weinberg and Arie Perliger, two well-respected terrorism experts, drew conclusions partly based on this author's work on the endings of terrorist campaigns.[1] What follows clarifies and explains that research.[2] Good research into how terrorism ends avoids the temptation to argue that there is a single cause of failure for most groups. Terrorist campaigns are complex; there are no "silver bullets." Two unfortunate tendencies emerge in interpreting research on how terrorist groups end: first, the myth of mutual exclusivity or uni-causality; and second, the belief that statistical frequencies provide a solid foundation for conclusions about specific threats. In a dynamic global context, there is no numerical substitute for judging which historical lessons are relevant and which are irrelevant to the end of al-Qa`ida. Failure to complete this hard analytical work can yield superficial conclusions that prolong the threat.

Overview: Six Pathways to the End

A better approach is to appreciate that terrorist groups end in complicated ways that apply to different kinds of groups under different conditions. There are at least six pathways to the decline and ending of terrorist groups in the modern era: decapitation, negotiations, success, failure, repression and reorientation.[3] These are not necessarily separate and distinct; for example, decapitation is often combined with implosion or repression. In the book *How Terrorism Ends*, for example, some groups—such as Chechen militants in Russia, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Britain, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey, among others—appear in more than one of the six chapters to emphasize that patterns can overlap. The book presents a thematic picture of the endings of groups, always arguing that individual groups may demonstrate more than one pattern. The following is a quick overview of these six pathways.

1. Decapitation

There are numerous examples where removing a group's leader had a huge effect on the decline or ending of a group. Regardless of the leader's operational role, removing a mouthpiece is a watershed. Sometimes leaders are arrested, as with Abimael Guzman and the Shining Path in Peru, or Shoko Asahara and Aum Shinrikyo in Japan. Sometimes they are killed, as were the leaders of the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines (Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani, Abu Sabaya and others), Chechen separatist leaders (Ibn Khattab, Abdul Khalim Saidullayev, Shamil Basayev and others), and Palestinians in Israel's so-called "targeted killings." The structure, size, age, and motivation of a group make a difference: those that have ended through decapitation have tended to be hierarchically structured, young, characterized by a cult of personality, and lacking a viable successor.[4] None of these describe al-Qa`ida.

2. Negotiations

Negotiations can lead to the achievement of some aims of a group and a decline or end of terrorism. Examples include the provisional IRA with the 1998 Good Friday Accords and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) with the 1990s peace process. Yet as these cases amply demonstrate, negotiations are not a panacea. Only a small percentage of groups (about 18%) have negotiated at all, and these tended to be long-lived groups: the average lifespan of groups that negotiate is between 20-25 years, whereas the average lifespan of terrorist groups overall tends to be about eight years.[5] More interesting still, of those that negotiate, only about 1 in 10 have the talks fail outright. On the other hand, few groups can be said to have achieved their aims. The predominant pattern is for talks to move slowly, with a lower level of violence, without resolution or outright failure. Negotiations typically divert the violence to another channel and can be a necessary, if at times insufficient, ingredient leading to the end of a given campaign.

3. Success

Sometimes organizations fulfill their objectives. Yet if this pathway is to be meaningful at all, it is important to clarify "success": most groups achieve tactical "process" goals that perpetuate the violence, but it is rare to achieve strategic "outcome" goals. Two classic cases of strategic success are Umkhonto, the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC), with the ending of apartheid; and Irgun Zvai Leumi (Irgun) with the establishment of the state of Israel. Gaining strategic objectives is rare: of the nearly 500 groups studied in *How Terrorism Ends*, only about 5% had by their own standards achieved

1 Leonard Weinberg and Arie Perliger, "How Terrorist Groups End," *CTC Sentinel* 3:2 (2010).

2 See especially Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

3 These six pathways correspond to six chapters in Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends,* and are much more thoroughly explained in that body of work.

4 There is some excellent, recently-published work on this topic. See, for example, Jenna Jordan, "When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation," *Security Studies* 18:4 (2009): pp. 719-755.

5 All of these statistics, including the list of groups included in the author's study, the criteria for their inclusion, and the "coding" of their data is available either in the Appendix of *How Terrorism Ends* or at the website, www.howterrorismends.com.

their aims.[6] To determine whether this statistic has any relevance to a specific threat, however, it is necessary to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature of the cause, its attractiveness, potential constituency, and the historical context within which it is being pursued. Not all causes or historical settings are equal.

4. Failure

There are two major ways that groups fail: they either implode by burning out or collapsing in upon themselves; or they lose popular support, making it difficult to operate or progress. Specific patterns include failure to pass the cause to the next generation, in-fighting and factionalization, loss of operational control, or accepting an exit or amnesty for individual members. Groups are marginalized when the ideology becomes irrelevant or the group loses contact with "the people"—usually as a result of police pressure. Yet one of the classic reasons for losing popular support is a group's own mistakes and targeting errors resulting in a widespread popular backlash. Fear of this happening is deep in al-Qa`ida's DNA: Ayman al-Zawahiri's 2005 letter to Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi in Iraq directly echoes al-Zawahiri's 1993 experience when his earlier group, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, met widespread popular revulsion and was gutted by the Egyptian government.[7] Al-Zawahiri understands that al-Qa`ida is deeply vulnerable to popular backlash due to its shaky theological legitimacy, sectarian targeting, brutal tactics, disruption of public order, and killing of innocent Muslims. Therefore, when analyzing al-Qa`ida, this is a pathway worthy of attention.

5. Repression

Repression—overwhelming military force abroad or police coercion at home—has resulted in the ending of a number of groups, including the People's Will (Russia) and the Shining Path (Peru). States can certainly kill off a terrorist group if they are willing to destroy virtually everything. It is a common tack, especially for young governments. In fact, it is harder to think of states that have not used repression in response to terrorism than those that have.[8] Nevertheless, repression is a difficult ending to achieve. It can draw sympathy to a cause (Irish unity following Bloody Sunday), export the problem to another country or region (Ingushetia or Dagestan with the Chechens), or place severe strain upon the fabric of the state (democratic Uruguay's response to the Tupamaros). It is also hard to sustain because of the high cost and because groups exploit strategies of leverage that turn a state's strength against itself. An interesting historical dynamic is the tendency for states, especially democracies, to instinctively react with repressive measures but then gain sophistication as counterterrorism policy develops. While there have been gratifying operational gains and attacks averted, the limits of this approach are evident in terms of ending al-Qa`ida.

6. Reorientation

A final pathway is transition out of terrorism toward either criminal behavior and motivations (Abu Sayyaf, the Colombian FARC) or full insurgency or even conventional war, especially if supported by a state (the Algerian Armed Islamic Group, some Kashmiri separatist groups). The categories are blurred, however, as many groups use criminal activities to support terrorism, or terrorism to support criminal activities. When the political cause of a group is fully replaced by greed, the behaviors, structures, and support systems of groups likewise change—as do the methods needed to counter them. Some argue that al-Qa`ida has already transitioned to a global insurgency. If so, it is a bad outcome. Semantics matter: "insurgents" are honorable fighters, while "terrorists" are not. Arguing that core al-Qa`ida has command and control over local insurgencies throughout the world bestows legitimacy on it and places the United States and its allies into a pseudo-colonial role. It also deemphasizes the most vulnerable aspect of this movement: its targeting of innocent non-combatants, especially fellow Muslims.

Key Points to Remember about Research

Progress has been made in recent years in understanding how terrorist groups end. Yet one must be careful in drawing specific policy conclusions, especially extrapolating from unexplained statistical assertions about causality or regularity of endings. It is not meaningful to separate endings into categories of single frequency. Weinberg and Perliger, for example, stated that they had studied the endings of 232 individual groups, broken down into individual categories presented in a summary chart. The sum of all the numbers in the "Frequency" column of the chart was 232, the total number of groups that the authors defined as terrorism. The article explained, "With the exception of the latter [the success outcome], these causes are not mutually exclusive. One cause may, in reality, reinforce the other."[9] Yet, in the chart each group is categorized as having had only one type of ending. This gives a misleading impression, especially for readers who concentrate their attention only on the chart.[10]

In the absence of more in-depth analysis or understanding, dubious conclusions might be reached on the basis of these numbers. In political science language, it is not clear how the 232 groups were "coded"—for example, what guided decisions about which groups to label with which ending. What is most striking is the remarkably high proportion of groups said to have ended with the capture or killing of group leadership (30.6%), even though decapitation is one of the endings commonly accompanied by other dynamics, especially implosion or repression. Moreover, there is no entry in the chart for "negotiations," even though the article mentions that groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the IRA negotiated. In general, the chart highlights certain types of endings (especially decapitation and repression) while leaving out or downplaying others (negotiation, reorientation). In the absence of further analysis, policy prescriptions drawn up on the basis of such statistics risk being wrong, or even dangerous.

6 Again, for the specific derivation of this figure and its strengths and weaknesses, see the Appendix of *How Terrorism Ends*.

7 This is described well in Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006).

8 A few examples of states that have used repression (especially early in a campaign) include: Argentina, Britain, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Uruguay.

9 Weinberg and Perliger.

10 In the days following the article, for example, the author observed that this chart (Outcome/Frequency/Percentage) appeared on popular military blogs excised from the rest of the article.

Conclusion

Instead of assessing the seriousness of the threat, the strength of al-Qai`da, or the success of the current fight against terrorism, different issues deserve focus, such as: What is known about how terrorist movements end? What has worked in previous counterterrorism campaigns? How close is the end of this threat? What will its characteristics be?

Research on how terrorism ends helps move closer to resolving these questions. There are no shortcuts. It is important to consider which of the lessons of how terrorism ends are relevant and which irrelevant to understand how, why, and under what circumstances al-Qa`ida will end—an assessment requiring an understanding of the political, cultural, and historical context, in-depth analysis of the enemy, a tolerance for complexity and a healthy appreciation for the limitations of statistics.

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Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

March 1, 2010 (INDONESIA): Doubts have been raised over the identities of suspected terrorists arrested at an alleged training camp in remote Aceh Province. Indonesian authorities charge that the terrorist camp was used by men belonging to Jemaah Islamiya. At least one well-known Western analyst, however, has since questioned whether those arrested are actually part of the group. – *Jakarta Post, March 1; AFP, February 23*

March 2, 2010 (UNITED KINGDOM): Dr. Muhammad Tahir ul-Qadri, a Pakistani Islamic scholar, issued a 600-page *fatwa* condemning suicide bombing as contrary to Islamic beliefs. According to ul-Qadri, "No person in the whole world can provide a single evidence from Koran who would create any exceptional permissibility to committing suicide bombing." Although ul-Qadri runs a Sufi movement in Lahore, he issued his ruling in the United Kingdom "so that the whole world may know that whatever the terrorists are doing, they no link with Islam, and I wanted to give this message to the youth in Western world also, that these kind of activities [suicide bombings] will lead them to hellfire, and they're not involved in any kind of martyrdom operation." – *BBC, March 2; Australian Broadcasting Corporation, March 3*

March 2, 2010 (PHILIPPINES): The Philippine military announced that the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) has been weakened as a result of the death of its leader, Albader Parad, in February 2010. According to Philippine Major-General Juancho Sabban, "There is no coordination among all the [ASG] groups. The Basilan group has no contact with the Sulu group or with the Tawi-tawi group. In effect, we have isolated each group and eventually, piece by piece, we will be able to neutralize these groups." – *ABS-CBN, March 2*

March 3, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A new report in the Associated Press suggested that Abdul Qayyum (also known as Qayyum Zakir), who was freed from Guantanamo Bay in December 2007, is now a senior commander in the Afghan Taliban. The AP report, citing two senior Afghan intelligence officials, said that Qayyum "is also seen as a leading candidate to be the next No. 2 in the Afghan Taliban hierarchy." Qayyum's key aide, Abdul Rauf, is also a former detainee at Guantanamo Bay. – *AP, March 3*

March 3, 2010 (IRAQ): Two suicide car bombers detonated explosives outside a local government housing office and near the provincial government headquarters in Ba`quba, Diyala Province. A third suicide bomber, disguised as an injured army lieutenant, detonated his explosives after he was brought by ambulance to the hospital where those wounded in the initial two blasts were being treated. The triple suicide bombings killed approximately 33 people. – *Telegraph, March 3*

March 3, 2010 (SINGAPORE): Singapore's government issued a threat advisory warning that it has "received indication" that a terrorist group is planning to attack oil tankers in the Malacca Strait. – *Bloomberg, March 4; UPI, March 4*

March 4, 2010 (UNITED STATES): Ahmad Wais Afzali, a New York City imam, pleaded guilty to charges that he lied to FBI agents investigating a bomb plot against New York. – *Investor's Business Daily, March 4*

March 4, 2010 (GERMANY): A German court convicted four Muslim men of planning attacks on U.S. soldiers and military facilities in Germany in 2007. The judge in the case said that the men plotted a "monstrous bloodbath, designed to kill at least 150 people, mostly Americans," and that the men wanted to commit a "second September 11." Two German converts to Islam, Fritz Gelowicz and Daniel Schneider, received 12-year jail sentences. Adem Yilmaz, a Turkish citizen, received an 11-year sentence. Attila Selek, a German of Turkish origin, was sentenced to five years in jail. – *Voice of America, March 4*

March 4, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Pakistan's authorities announced that Afghan Taliban leader Agha Jan Mo'tassem was taken into custody in Karachi. It is not clear when he was arrested, but he has reportedly been missing for two weeks. Mo'tassem is a member of the Afghan Taliban's Quetta *shura*. – *CNN, March 5; AKI, March 4*

March 5, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani forces attacked a militant facility in Mohmand Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing at

least 16 Taliban fighters. Pakistan's interior minister, Rehman Malik, said that senior Pakistani Taliban leaders Faqir Muhammad and Qari Ziaur Rehman may have been killed in the raid. – *Reuters, March 6*

March 5, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a convoy of Shi`a civilians in the Hangu area in Pakistan's northwest, killing at least 12 people. – *Reuters, March 5*

March 6, 2010 (RUSSIA): Russian authorities confirmed that they killed militant leader Aleksandr Tikhomirov (also known as Said Buryatsky), who they said was a trainer of suicide bombers in the North Caucasus. Authorities said that Tikhomirov had a role in the November 2009 bombing of the Nevsky Express luxury train that killed 28 people. – *New York Times, March 6*

March 7, 2010 (YEMEN): Alleged al-Qa`ida operative Sharif Mobley tried to escape custody in Yemen, killing one of his guards before being subdued. Details have emerged suggesting that Mobley, who reportedly holds both U.S. and Yemeni citizenship, worked as a laborer for a U.S. nuclear power plant in New Jersey between 2002-2008. – *AFP, March 12*

March 7, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. drone strike killed at least three suspected militants in Miran Shah, North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *BBC, March 9*

March 8, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the gate of an interrogation center used by Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency in Lahore, the capital of Punjab Province. The explosion, which collapsed the building, killed at least 14 people. A spokesman for Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan took credit for the attack. – *New York Times, March 8; Bloomberg, March 8; Wall Street Journal, March 8*

March 8, 2010 (NIGER): At least one suicide bomber attacked a military outpost in western Niger, killing five soldiers. Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb later claimed credit for the attack. – *AFP, March 12*

March 9, 2010 (IRELAND): Irish authorities arrested seven people as part of an international investigation into a plot to assassinate Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks for his role in drawing a caricature of the Prophet Muhammad in 2007. The arrested consist of four men and three women, of both Moroccan and Yemeni descent. – *Independent, March 10*

March 9, 2010 (INDONESIA): Indonesian authorities killed Dulmatin, a Jemaah Islamiya bomb expert, during a raid near Jakarta. Dulmatin, who also had ties to the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines, was wanted for his role in the 2002 Bali nightclub blasts that killed 202 people. – *Philippine Star, March 9; Christian Science Monitor, March 10*

March 10, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated explosives inside an Afghan police base in Paktika Province, wounding nine officers. – *Reuters, March 10*

March 10, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Armed gunmen stormed the offices of U.S.-based Christian charity World Vision in the North-West Frontier Province, killing six aid workers. – *AFP, March 9*

March 10, 2010 (NORTH AFRICA): Spain's deputy prime minister announced that al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) released a Spanish aid worker kidnapped on November 29, 2009 in Mauritania. – *CNN, March 10*

March 11, 2010 (UNITED KINGDOM): A British Airways computer expert appeared in court and is charged with planning suicide bombings. The man, Bangladesh-born Rajib Karim, volunteered to join the airline's cabin crew as part of the plot. – *AFP, March 11*

March 12, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Two suicide bombers targeted an army convoy in Lahore, the capital of Punjab Province, killing at least 43 people. The bombs ripped through a crowded neighborhood bazaar. – *Washington Post, March 12*

March 13, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Multiple suicide bombers attacked Kandahar, killing at least 30 people. The bombers targeted a newly fortified prison, a police headquarters, and two other locations. It appears that the bombers tried to free insurgents from the city's prison, but failed. – *Fox News, March 14; AP, April 16*

March 13, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a security checkpoint in Swat, killing approximately 14 people. – *The News International, March 14*

March 14, 2010 (YEMEN): An airstrike in southern Yemen killed "two leading al Qaeda elements who were planning terrorist operations against vital installations in Yemen," according to Yemeni security officials. – *Reuters, March 14*

March 15, 2010 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber targeted a military checkpoint and laborers in Falluja, Anbar Province, killing eight people. Authorities said that the bomber parked a car bomb near a military checkpoint, exited the vehicle and detonated his explosives vest among a group of laborers. Shortly afterward, the car bomb exploded. – *AFP, March 15*

March 16, 2010 (INDIA): Indian authorities said that the Indian Mujahidin was responsible for the February 13 bombing in Pune. – *AFP, March 16*

March 16, 2010 (INDIA): Indian media reported that Mumbai police arrested two men for plotting attacks against the Bhabha Atomic Research Center, a fuel storage depot and a shopping center. The men are residents of Mumbai. According to UPI, "The target at the Bhabha Atomic Research Center, India's primary nuclear research center, is believed to have been the administrative building and not laboratories or reactors." – *UPI, March 16*

March 17, 2010 (GLOBAL): U.S.-born radical cleric Anwar al-`Awlaqi released a new audiotape, asking American Muslims, "how can your conscience allow you to live in peaceful coexistence with the nation that is responsible for the tyranny and crimes committed against your own brothers and sisters?" Al-`Awlaqi is believed to be hiding in Yemen. – *Voice of America, March 18*

March 17, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A Pakistani court charged five American men from Virginia with attempting to join al-Qa`ida-linked groups to carry out attacks in Pakistan. If convicted, the men—who deny the charges—could face life in prison. – *New York Daily News, March 17*

March 17, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Two suspected U.S. unmanned aerial drones killed at least seven militants in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally

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Administered Tribal Areas. The drones appeared to target two separate vehicles, and the strikes were separated by approximately 50 minutes. – *AP, March 17*

March 18, 2010 (UNITED STATES): David Coleman Headley pleaded guilty in a Chicago court to scouting targets in Mumbai, India, ahead of the November 2008 terrorist attacks in the city. Headley, a U.S. citizen of Pakistani descent, also surveyed targets in a plot to attack a Danish newspaper for printing caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. – *Washington Post, March 19*

March 21, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. drone strike killed eight militants in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *Reuters, March 21*

March 21, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A remotely-detonated bomb exploded in Quetta, Baluchistan Province, killing three people. Two policemen were among the dead. – *al-Jazira, March 21*

March 22, 2010 (UNITED STATES): A U.S. district judge ordered the release of Mohamedou Ould Salahi, a detainee at Guantanamo Bay. According to the Associated Press, "the Obama administration could appeal [the judge's] order. Even if the administration were to decide against appealing, Salahi would remain at Guantanamo until U.S. diplomats found a nation willing to accept him." – *AP, March 22*

March 22, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani police foiled a terrorist plot targeting Westerners in Islamabad. Noor Jahan and Rashid Bakhtar—both former members of Pakistan's paramilitary force—were arrested after plotting to attack the five-star Serena Hotel, the French Club restaurant, a police station and a girls' school. Another report said that the men wanted to kidnap Jordan's ambassador to Pakistan. The men reportedly worked for Pakistani Taliban operative Qari Hussain. – *CNN, March 22; AP, March 23*

March 22, 2010 (YEMEN): The U.S. government warned ships transiting near Yemen's coast that "information suggests that al Qaeda remains interested in maritime attacks in the Bab al-Mandab Strait, Red Sea, and the Gulf of Aden along the coast of Yemen." – *Reuters, March 22*

March 23, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar reportedly appointed Abdul Qayyum Zakir and Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor as deputies to succeed Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who was detained by Pakistani authorities in February. Zakir is a former inmate at Guantanamo Bay. – *BBC, March 23*

March 23, 2010 (LIBYA): The Libyan government released 214 Islamic militants from prison after they renounced violence. Among those released were 34 members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. – *AP, March 24*

March 24, 2010 (SAUDI ARABIA): Saudi authorities said they arrested 113 suspected al-Qa`ida militants during a months-long security sweep. The arrests foiled several attacks on oil facilities. – *AP, March 24*

March 25, 2010 (GLOBAL): A new audio statement purportedly by Usama bin Ladin was broadcast by al-Jazira. During the speech, Bin Ladin warned that if the United States executes Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, then al-Qa`ida would "execute any of your people that we take prisoner." – *CBS, March 25*

March 26, 2010 (UNITED STATES): Chicago taxi driver Raja Lahrasib Khan was arrested on charges of two counts of providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization. He allegedly attempted to send money overseas to al-Qa`ida. Khan was born in Pakistan, but became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1988. Authorities also say that Khan allegedly discussed attacking a stadium in the United States. – *Chicago Sun-Times, March 26*

March 29, 2010 (RUSSIA): Two female suicide bombers attacked Moscow's Lubyanka and Park Kultury metro stations, killing 40 people. Chechen rebel leader Doku Umarov took credit for the attacks. – *Guardian, March 29; National Post, April 1*

March 31, 2010 (RUSSIA): Two suicide bombs ripped through the Dagestani town of Kizlyar, killing 12 people. Nine of the dead were police officers. – *Interfax, March 31*