



COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER AT WEST POINT

# CTC SENTINEL

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## Contents

### FEATURE ARTICLE

#### 1 The Merger of Al-Shabab and Qa` idat al-Jihad

By Nelly Lahoud

### REPORTS

#### 5 A Profile of Los Zetas: Mexico's Second Most Powerful Drug Cartel

By Samuel Logan

#### 8 Hizb Allah's Counterintelligence War

By Benedetta Berti

#### 11 Afghanistan's Conflict Minerals: The Crime-State-Insurgent Nexus

By Matthew DuPée

#### 14 The Complicated Relationship Between the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban

By Daud Khattak

#### 16 Preventing Terrorism and Conflict in Libya: An Innovative Role for the United Nations?

By Naureen Chowdhury Fink

#### 21 Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

#### 24 CTC Sentinel Staff & Contacts

## About the CTC Sentinel

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

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not of the U.S. Military Academy, the Department of the Army, or any other agency of the U.S. Government.

# The Merger of Al-Shabab and Qa` idat al-Jihad

By Nelly Lahoud



Al-Shabab members celebrate their merger with Ayman al-Zawahiri's Qa` idat al-Jihad. - Photo by AFP/Getty Images

ON FEBRUARY 9, 2012, al-Qa`ida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri announced the merger of the Somali militant group al-Shabab and "Qa` idat al-Jihad," the name he has used since at least 2005 to designate the group otherwise known as al-Qa`ida.<sup>1</sup> This merger is significant because it materialized only after two key people had been eliminated, namely Usama bin Ladin in May 2011 and Fadil Harun (also known as Fazul Abdullah Mohammad) in June 2011. According to media reports, Harun was shot and killed by Somali government forces when he and his companion, Musa Husayn, refused to stop at a checkpoint in Mogadishu.<sup>2</sup>

Harun was a seasoned al-Qa`ida operative and highly trusted by Bin Ladin.<sup>3</sup> His leading role in the planning and execution of the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam distinguished him in the eyes of the senior leadership. Soon thereafter, he was appointed as al-Qa`ida's *amin sirr*, or "confidential secretary." Washington's security apparatus was keenly aware of Harun's value to al-Qa`ida; U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was quick to remark on his death, hailing it as a "significant blow to Al Qaeda, its extremist allies and its operations in East Africa."<sup>4</sup> Harun's two-volume (1,156 pages) autobiography released in February 2009 gave an intimate look inside al-Qa`ida's political culture, with

1 For details regarding the nuance between "al-Qa`ida" and "Qa` idat al-Jihad," see footnote #6.

2 Jeffrey Gettleman, "Somalis Kill Mastermind of 2 U.S. Embassy Bombings," *New York Times*, June 11, 2011.

3 Harun also oversaw the travel arrangements of Usama bin Ladin's wives, spent time reciting the Qur'an with Bin Ladin's sons, and even shaved the al-Qa`ida chief's head.

4 Gettleman.

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sufficient hints to allow the reader to paint a picture of the dynamics among al-Shabab, al-Qa`ida and Ayman al-Zawahiri.<sup>5</sup>

This article reflects on what it took for this merger to occur. It discusses al-Shabab's past unrequited courtship of al-Qa`ida, most notably its 2009 pledge of allegiance to Bin Ladin, as well as the significance of Fadil Harun to both al-Shabab and al-Qa`ida. The article concludes by speculating whether Harun's death was, in fact, an accident, or whether he was double-crossed by al-Shabab's leaders to curry favor with al-Zawahiri to obtain the acceptance that Bin Ladin had denied them.

#### Al-Shabab's Courtship of Al-Qa`ida

On the morning of February 9, 2012, readers of the jihadist website al-Shumukh were teased by the headline "Glad Tidings (*bushrasarra*): al-Shaykh???" May God Protect Him and the Leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, May God Protect Him." Within a few hours, the identity of this shaykh was revealed when the awaited video was released by al-Shumukh and other jihadist websites. The first seven minutes of the video featured an audio recording by the leader of al-Shabab, Mukhtar Abu al-Zubayr, addressing al-Zawahiri as "our beloved leader," adding: "on behalf of my brethren, leaders and soldiers in Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahidin, I pledge allegiance to you [promising to adhere to] God's Book and the Sunna of His Messenger." During the remaining seven minutes of the video, al-Zawahiri appeared to herald the *bushra* to the *umma*, announcing that al-Shabab has joined "Qa`idat al-Jihad,"<sup>6</sup>

one of the many signs that the "jihadist movement is growing with God's help."<sup>7</sup>

Why should this merger come about now when the same Abu al-Zubayr had made a similar pledge to Usama bin Ladin more than two years ago? It was in September 2009 when al-Shabab released an earlier video featuring an audio recording of Abu al-Zubayr,

### **"The al-Qa`ida operatives did not see the rationale behind the formation of al-Shabab, believing that it would undermine the Islamic Courts Union."**

entitled "Labbaika Ya Usama" (At Your Service Usama). In it, he addressed Bin Ladin as "our shaykh and leader (*amir*)," adding that "we await your guidance during this advanced stage of jihad."<sup>8</sup> The production of this video was somewhat misleading. The title, "Labbaika Ya Usama," implied that al-Shabab was responding to an invitation issued by Bin Ladin. Since the video was choreographed in such a manner that it featured Abu al-Zubayr's pledge following a statement by Bin Ladin in support of jihadists in Somalia,<sup>9</sup> it gave the impression that the union was complete. Yet Bin Ladin's statements never addressed al-Shabab by name;

the author using the name "Qa`idat al-Jihad" are those that were released in 2005. See, for example, Ayman al-Zawahiri, "Haqa'iq al-Sira` bayna al-Islam wa-al-Kufr," Minbar al-Tawhid wa-al-Jihad, accessed January 27, 2012; "Hiwar ma' al-Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri bi-Munasabat Murur Arba` Sanawat 'ala Ghazawat New York wa-Washington," Minbar al-Tawhid wa-al-Jihad, accessed January 27, 2012. If the author's observation is correct, it may suggest that some differences between al-Zawahiri and Bin Ladin occurred that led al-Zawahiri to start using this name.

7 "Bushra Sarra," Shabakat Shumukh al-Islam, accessed February 9, 2012. The author is grateful for the assistance received from colleague Muhammad al-'Ubaydi who monitors jihadist websites for the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point.

8 This video was posted on the Shabakat al-Ansar al-Mujahidin forum.

9 Usama bin Ladin, "al-Nizal al-Nizal ya Abtal al-Su-mal," September 2009.

instead, his statements carefully used generic terms, displaying support of "jihadists in Somalia."

Since al-Shabab's courtship was repeatedly ignored in Bin Ladin's subsequent statements, when he was killed in May 2011 and jihadist websites announced that al-Zawahiri would succeed him in heading "Qa`idat al-Jihad," the group was quick to welcome the new appointee. 'Ali Dir, the spokesman for al-Shabab, released another misleading, but admittedly artful, statement eulogizing Bin Ladin and welcoming the appointment of al-Zawahiri as the new al-Qa`ida chief:

We welcome the outstanding choice of [Shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri], and we shall maintain our covenant with him (*sanakunu ma`abu 'ala al-'abd*) as we did with his brethren before him. Our covenant is to defend our outposts/frontiers (*sadd thaghbrana*) as Abu 'Abdallah/Usama bin Ladin designated us when he described us as one of jihad's legions (*faylaq min fayaliq al-jihad*) and one of the outposts [anchoring the world of] Islam (*thaghr min thughur al-islam*). We shall maintain our commitment to this covenant and protect our frontiers. [With this commitment], Islam and the mujahidin will not be weakened. We shall continue to confront the enemy as we have always done.<sup>10</sup>

The casual reader might be forgiven for assuming that Dir's statement suggested that al-Shabab was part of al-Qa`ida and that he was simply transferring the covenant that the group once had with Bin Ladin to al-Zawahiri. Yet, until then, neither al-Zawahiri nor Bin Ladin formally welcomed al-Shabab into the fold or even mentioned them by name. Bin Ladin did indeed use the expressions *faylaq* (legion) and *thaghr* (outpost) in reference to Somalia, as Dir mentioned; but, as noted earlier, the contexts in which he used these expressions were in support of either "jihadists" or "people of Somalia." One

5 Fadil Harun, "al-Harb 'ala al-Islam: Qissat Fadil Harun," volume 1-2, February 2009. In March/April 2012, the author will release a report that examines al-Qa`ida through the lens of Harun, which will be published by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point.

6 The name "Qa`idat al-Jihad" may reflect internal tension among al-Qa`ida's senior leaders. According to Lawrence Wright, "The Man Behind Bin Ladin," *New Yorker*, September 16, 2002, this name designates the merger between al-Zawahiri's group and that of Bin Ladin. Yet not all the senior leaders use it. To the author's knowledge, Usama bin Ladin did not use it, using the familiar "al-Qa`ida" or "tanzim al-Qa`ida" instead. Reuven Paz wrote an article on the early usage of this name: Reuven Paz, "Qa`idat al-Jihad - A New Name on the Road to Palestine," *Global Report*, July 5, 2002. Even al-Zawahiri did not always use it. The earliest statements found by

10 'Ali Dir, Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahidin," Shabakat al-Jihad al-'Alami, accessed January 18, 2012. Note that the author's translation of the Arabic is based on a translation (presumably from Somali, but the document does not specify).

can safely assume that if Bin Ladin wanted to show support specifically for al-Shabab, he knew how to spell their name.

Clearly, al-Zawahiri was not being duped and Diri would not attempt to trick him. Diri pledged al-Shabab's support to al-Zawahiri only after Fadil Harun was killed in June 2011. How then might Harun and Bin Ladin's death make way for al-Shabab's membership in Qa`idat al-Jihad?

#### Fadil Harun and Al-Shabab

Harun witnessed first-hand the formation of al-Shabab in 2006 and its subsequent rise on the Somali scene. His account betrayed a clear discontent with the group's ideological worldview and political immaturity. His autobiography conveyed that he expressed his views to al-Shabab. It is likely that when his manuscript was posted on a jihadist website in February 2009, his views became known to Bin Ladin and would have caused him to be wary of lending specific support to al-Shabab.

To begin with, Harun's manuscript made clear that there were no organizational ties between al-Qa`ida and al-Shabab. Further, at no point did Bin Ladin or any of al-Qa`ida's senior leaders, who were said to be based in Pakistan's Waziristan at the time, guide or influence the process of forming al-Shabab. By the time al-Shabab was formed, there were just a few al-Qa`ida members based in Somalia, so few that "one could count them on the fingers of one's hand."<sup>11</sup> They were acting on the basis of their own judgments and initiatives. Talha al-Sudani, who was most active in the formation of al-Shabab, was at that time suspended from al-Qa`ida.<sup>12</sup>

Except for Talha, the remaining al-Qa`ida members did not support the formation of al-Shabab. Yusuf al-Tanzani (Saleh al-Nabhan),<sup>13</sup> 'Abd al-

Jabbar al-Kini (Abu Wafa'), 'Isa al-Kini and Harun believed that their actions should be faithful to the disciplined spirit of al-Qa`ida (although 'Isa al-Kini eventually became more involved). They wanted to maintain their independence in Somalia on the basis that they were the "shaykh's men"—meaning, their loyalty was to al-Qa`ida and they would only take orders from Bin Ladin. In addition, the al-Qa`ida operatives did not see the rationale behind the formation of al-Shabab, believing that it would undermine the Islamic Courts Union (ICU).<sup>14</sup>

The "shaykh's men" had no qualms standing up to the leaders of al-Shabab. According to Harun's account, just before becoming the first leader of al-Shabab in 2006, Isma'il Arale asked Harun to prepare a report for him about the Islamic movements in Somalia.<sup>15</sup> In his report, Harun

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indicated that: the Islamic movements "are not operating in complete secrecy yet they were not public enough, hence the Somali people did not know with whom they were dealing"; that these groups were "claiming to be al-Qa`ida and I explained to him that this public competition to be close to al-Qa`ida does not serve the interest of the Somali

people"; that the groups were competing to attract *muhajirun* (foreign fighters) but neglected to win the support of their own people; and finally Harun warned Arale that these different groups may well raise arms against each other in the future.<sup>16</sup>

When, despite their protestations, al-Shabab was formed in 2006, Harun and al-Nabhan paid Arale a visit during which Harun made the views of the "shaykh's men" explicit:

we [see ourselves] as guests in this state and there is an official body called the Islamic Courts [whose authority ought to be respected] and most of you [now in al-Shabab] are members of the Courts; why then resort to founding a new group?<sup>17</sup>

Harun proceeded to assure Arale that he would be happy to assist in any way he could only if it served the interests of all. "As to taking orders from him [Arale] or anyone else," Harun wrote, "this shall not happen because I am not part of the new group."<sup>18</sup>

At the urging of Arale, Harun attended as an observer (*muraqib*) one of the early meetings the group held. Al-Nabhan chose to boycott the meeting because he was not enthusiastic about a group that, in his mind, was going to undermine the ICU. On the agenda of the meeting was the distribution of various portfolios. Harun was most surprised when it was announced that he would be entrusted with the security portfolio. Harun told Arale after the meeting that he refused to be considered as a member (*'udw*) but agreed to be an assistant (*muta`awin*).<sup>19</sup> When Harun met with the Executive Committee of al-Shabab, which consisted of six men—four of whom were members of the ICU<sup>20</sup>—he told them that he would not help al-Shabab undermine the ICU. Instead, he believed that the two were one and the same body, and the men he

11 Harun, vol. 2, p. 48.

12 Ibid., p. 21. Harun claimed that Talha was killed in an ambush by U.S.-Kenyan-Ethiopian Special Operations forces the first week of 2007.

13 He was killed in September 2009 by U.S. Special Forces. See Jeffrey Gettleman and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Kills Top Qaeda Militant in Southern Somalia," *New York Times*, September 14, 2009.

14 For more on the dynamics that led to the formation of al-Shabab, see this author's forthcoming report.

15 According to Harun, Adam `Ayro was involved in al-Shabab, but was not the group's founding *amir*. Harun asserted that Isma'il Arale was the first *amir* of the group. See Harun, vol. 2, p. 425.

16 Ibid., pp. 59-60.

17 Ibid., p. 60.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., p. 69.

20 Ibid. They were: Mukhtar, Hasan Afghawi, al-Mu'allim, Ahmed Madobe, al-Mu'allim 'Abdallah and Ahmed Khalif (Harun implied that Khalif was from the foreign ministry).



was planning to train would form the backbone of the security apparatus of the ICU.<sup>21</sup>

Harun's account should dispel the common view that posits that al-Qa`ida exerted influence on al-Shabab through him. Following Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia in 2006, many, including

**“Harun was also keen to stress that as far as the ‘original al-Qa`ida’ was concerned, it was Sayf al-`Adl, not al-Zawahiri, who was second-in-command after Bin Ladin.”**

Harun, fled Somalia to neighboring Kenya. Yet even after he returned to Somalia, it is doubtful that Harun became immediately involved with al-Shabab. Instead, the latter part of his manuscript that describes events between approximately March 2007 and January 2009 is not informed by his operational activities. Instead, it is based on media reports, which suggests that he was not involved in the events on the Somali scene. If he did collaborate with al-Shabab after January 2009, he would have done so on his own terms. Clearly, al-Shabab could not have been pleased with his uncooperative stance.

#### Was Harun's Death an Accident?

The tensions between Harun and al-Shabab raise doubts about the official story of Harun's death in June 2011. Harun was killed within six weeks of Bin Ladin's death. The reported story surrounding Harun's killing is that he and Musa Husayn, his companion, accidentally drove into a checkpoint manned by forces from Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) instead of heading into an al-Shabab-controlled area. It would be unusual for Harun to make such an amateurish error, and the U.S. military whom he successfully evaded for years was likely surprised by this reported blunder.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 69-70.

<sup>22</sup> In his manuscript, Harun gave the impression that he quickly identified people who were working for U.S., Kenyan or Israeli intelligence (e.g., vol. 1, pp. 543-48). One

Soon after he was killed, *Somalia Report* published an article by two journalists whose names were withheld for security reasons, claiming that al-Shabab leader Abu al-Zubayr was behind Harun's death. According to the report, Harun was given instructions to head to an al-Shabab-controlled checkpoint to meet other jihadists, but Abu al-Zubayr had it dismantled, causing Harun and Husayn to drive on, unknowingly falling into a TFG checkpoint. The report further indicated that Harun had orders from al-Qa`ida to change al-Shabab's leaders and replace them with foreign ones, which threatened Abu al-Zubayr's position.<sup>23</sup> It would be out of character for Harun to threaten to oust Somali leaders; his manuscript made clear that he wanted Somalis to be at the forefront of the Somali scene. The fact that there is discussion of al-Shabab being behind Harun's death, however, suggests that his differences with al-Shabab were known to many. These differences are echoed elsewhere. When in January 2012 the Global Islamic Media Front in collaboration with al-Kataib Media Foundation announced that al-Shabab welcomed questions posted online between February 4-14 to be addressed by 'Ali Dirri in an online interview, several of the posted questions raised Harun's relationship with al-Shabab. Some were specific, asking whether his differences with al-Shabab were indeed behind his death, while others asked for an explanation as to why al-Shabab did not eulogize Harun.<sup>24</sup>

The reader of Harun's manuscript would not be surprised to learn that al-Shabab might have engineered his “accidental” death. For if Harun continued to make his dissatisfaction with al-Shabab public and persisted in displaying his concern over their political immaturity, it would not be surprising that they should grow impatient with him. They may have put up with him because they realized that eliminating him would undoubtedly upset Bin Ladin; after Bin

example that illustrates his operative skills is the way he managed to escape from Kenyan authorities just before the Mombasa bombing of the Paradise Hotel (and an attempt to down an Israeli airplane with a shoulder-fired missile) in 2002. Harun was part of the cell that planned this bombing. For details, see Harun, vol. 1, pp. 508-509.

<sup>23</sup> “Al-Shabab Leader Arranged Fazul's Death,” *Somalia Report*, June 16, 2011.

<sup>24</sup> Shabakat Shumukh al-Islam, January 4, 2012.

Ladin was killed, however, they had (at least) two reasons to remove him from the scene. The first is obvious: it would be easier to have him killed than to exile him. The second is somewhat speculative but potentially revealing: Harun was unquestionably a “Bin Ladin man,” and although he acknowledged the close ties that developed between al-Zawahiri and Bin Ladin, Harun never warmed to al-Zawahiri or genuinely respected his worldview. His two-volume autobiography does not paint al-Zawahiri in a flattering light. Harun was also keen to stress that as far as the “original al-Qa`ida” was concerned, it was Sayf al-`Adl, not al-Zawahiri, who was second-in-command after Bin Ladin.<sup>25</sup> Reading between the lines, even if Bin Ladin succeeded in bringing al-Zawahiri into the fold, Harun's tone invites the reader to muse on a lingering tension between the worldview of Bin Ladin and that of al-Zawahiri. What is more, Harun had plans to write a third volume.

It is possible that al-Shabab reasoned that eliminating Harun would be a welcome gift to al-Zawahiri, hoping that in return al-Zawahiri would grant the group membership in his Qa`idat al-Jihad. If this skeptical view is plausible, then al-Shabab's reasoning with respect

**“The same logic would hold true with respect to al-Shabab. Bin Ladin chose not to bestow upon them membership in the club. Al-Zawahiri, on the other hand, did.”**

to al-Zawahiri is not unfounded. Whereas Bin Ladin granted al-Qa`ida in Iraq membership in al-Qa`ida and lived to regret it, al-Zawahiri was uncritical of his assessment of the groups he admitted to Qa`idat al-Jihad—probably without the blessing of Bin Ladin or

<sup>25</sup> Harun, vol. 2, p. 500. The “original al-Qa`ida” (*al-Qa`ida al-Umm*) is a description Harun used to distinguish al-Qa`ida from other jihadist groups, including those who insert “al-Qa`ida” in their names. The author's forthcoming report devotes a chapter on the difference between the “original al-Qa`ida” and its imitators.

even against his wishes. For example, it was al-Zawahiri who announced in September 2006 that a large segment from Egypt's Islamic Group and Algeria's Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) officially joined Qa'idat al-Jihad. He claimed that Bin Ladin "entrusted me" (*kallafani*) to make the announcement with respect to the GSPC.<sup>26</sup> The skeptic might observe that if Bin Ladin wanted to welcome the group into al-Qa'ida, he could have done it himself when he released a statement two months earlier. The same logic would hold true with respect to al-Shabab. Bin Ladin chose not to bestow upon them membership in the club. Al-Zawahiri, on the other hand, did.

Did it take the killing of Harun to convince al-Zawahiri that al-Shabab is worthy of his Qa'idat al-Jihad? Since he has welcomed other groups in the fold in the past, he may have welcomed al-Shabab anyway. It is safe to assume, however, that al-Zawahiri clearly would not have welcomed a third volume of Harun's autobiography.

*Nelly Lahoud is Associate Professor at the Combating Terrorism Center in the Department of Social Sciences at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point.*

## A Profile of Los Zetas: Mexico's Second Most Powerful Drug Cartel

By Samuel Logan

MOMENTS AFTER HIS daughter's baptism in 1999, the head of the Gulf Cartel, Osiel Cardenas Guillen, ordered his bodyguard to kill his daughter's godfather. After parting ways with his guests, Guillen climbed into the driver's seat of his Dodge Durango, as his long-time business partner settled into the front passenger seat. Guillen's bodyguard, Arturo Guzman Decenas, then sat in the back on the passenger side, and without hesitation executed the godfather with a bullet to the head.<sup>1</sup> For ordering the execution, Guillen earned the nickname "The Friend Killer," and Arturo Guzman Decenas earned Guillen's trust.

Soon after the murder, Guzman became known as "Z-1," and would become the founder of Los Zetas, literally "The Zs": an organization that began as an elite security detail and would evolve across 12 years to become one of Mexico's most powerful criminal organizations. Focused on Los Zetas, this article will survey the formation and development of Los Zetas as first a bodyguard unit and then an independent criminal organization. It will also discuss the organization's recent expansion through Mexico and into the United States, and consider potential future scenarios.

### Violent Beginnings

As Gulf Cartel leader Osiel Cardenas Guillen gained regional power and recognition in Mexico's Tamaulipas State during the late 1990s, he became increasingly paranoid. The Gulf Cartel was not his to absolutely control; there were several rivals across Tamaulipas State that Guillen needed to "bend the knee or die." He knew his future would soon be of violence and blood. The young cartel boss needed an elite unit of bodyguards. Turning to Guzman, he asked in the late 1990s where they could find such men. Guzman's response? The Mexican military.<sup>2</sup> Through careful contact and negotiation, Guzman convinced at least

31 men to leave military service and fall under his command to protect the head of the Gulf Cartel. Some of these men had operated under the command of a Mexican Special Forces unit known as the Grupos Aeromoviles de Fuerzas Especiales (GAFE); they had superior training, and some had completed a "training the trainers" program. All of the new recruits were well equipped to build out a paramilitary narco-army to protect the boss and do his bidding.<sup>3</sup>

Once Guillen felt secure, he broadened the mission. The first phase of Los Zetas' development, which lasted from 1997 to October 2004, was thus marked by two central roles: protect the principal and hunt enemies. The three most trusted men within Los Zetas' rank-and-file—Arturo Guzman (Z-1), Rogelio Gonzalez Pizana (Z-2), and Heriberto Lazcano (Z-3)—led most of these secret missions into cities and towns across Tamaulipas to execute Guillen's rivals and ensure that the Gulf Cartel became the most powerful drug trafficking organization in Tamaulipas and along Mexico's Gulf coast.

The Los Zetas operators' training ensured a high operational success rate. Operations were often capped off with an unprecedented act of barbarism.<sup>4</sup> Early Los Zetas operators believed in a basic premise of psychological operations: "if you frighten your enemy enough, you may defeat him without having to fight."<sup>5</sup>

Military training was fundamental to Los Zetas early success. The presence of Los Zetas in the Mexican criminal system raised the bar on both professionalism and violence. Rival groups would need to improve their recruiting and training, and they would have to match Los Zetas in both brutality and violence.

As Los Zetas labored to consolidate control of Mexico's Gulf coast for their boss, the organization grew and evolved. Early 2002 to late 2004 was an important window of time for Los Zetas, as the group passed through an evolutionary phase that altered the fundamental

<sup>26</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri, "Qadaya Sakhina," September 2006. This was the second interview al-Sahab conducted with al-Zawahiri, coinciding with the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

<sup>1</sup> Ricardo Ravelo, *Osiel: vida y tragedia de un capo* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Francisco Gomez, "Los Zetas por dentro," *El Universal*, December 31, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Logan, "Preface: Los Zetas and a New Barbarism," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 22:5 (2011).

<sup>5</sup> Jon Elliston, "Psywar Terror Tactics," *ParaScope*, Inc., 1996.

structure of the paramilitary operative organization. The Mexican military captured Guillen's primary accountant, Ruben Saucedo Rivera ("El Cacahuete") on January 14, 2002. Arturo Guzman (Z-1) died in a shootout with soldiers in Matamoros on November 21, 2002.<sup>6</sup> Less than four months after Guzman's death, the Mexican military captured

**"The presence of Los Zetas in the Mexican criminal system raised the bar on both professionalism and violence. Rival groups would need to improve their recruiting and training, and they would have to match Los Zetas in both brutality and violence."**

Guillen himself in Matamoros on March 14, 2003. Former policeman Eduardo Costilla ("El Coss"), and Osiel Guillen's older brother Antonio Cardenas Guillen ("Tony Tormenta"), slowly began to fill the vacuum left by Osiel Guillen's absence, although the Gulf Cartel *capo* remained very much the head of the organization from behind bars.

Osiel Guillen's chief assassin, known as "El Kelin," snapped into place as the next leader of the organization after Guzman's November 2002 death, but he was captured in October 2004.<sup>7</sup> The organization then fell upon the shoulders of Z-3, Heriberto Lazcano, who through his own acts of violence and cold calculation had earned several other nicknames, among them "The Executioner."

With Lazcano at the head of Los Zetas, Osiel Guillen in prison, and the Gulf Cartel weakened, Los Zetas entered its second phase of development, one that lasted until January 2010.

#### Gulf Cartel Divorce

Beginning in October 2004, Los Zetas embarked on a new mission: independence from the Gulf Cartel. Heriberto Lazcano oversaw the recruitment of elite Special Forces units from Guatemala, known as *Kaibiles*, to bolster the protection of his own high-level operatives and assist with training and recruitment.<sup>8</sup> He reached out to military contacts to establish clandestine recruitment channels; he increased the number of training camps in Tamaulipas, where new recruits learned the basics of small-unit tactics, firearms use, and communications; and he oversaw the development of a clandestine radio network. Los Zetas' new commander expanded the organization's revenue-generation operations beyond extortion and, eventually, to the control of waypoints along drug trafficking routes, known as *plazas*, where lesser organizations would have to pay a tax in exchange for safe passage.

Heriberto Lazcano also bolstered an accounting system that would become the backbone of Los Zetas' operations across Mexico and eventually into Central America. Visionary or not, Lazcano knew that the strength of the organization under his command would be directly connected to its ability to earn and protect revenue. These decisions and more produced the net effect of establishing Los Zetas as an independent organization while distancing it from the Gulf Cartel.

As the two organizations grew apart, El Coss steadily captured command of the Gulf Cartel, and in a snap decision ordered in early 2010 the kidnap and murder of a Los Zetas operator in Reynosa. The Los Zetas number two in command, Miguel Trevino (El-40), demanded the release of the captive. El Coss refused, and war ensued.<sup>9</sup> This war in the north defined the third and current phase of Los Zetas' development, and the weakening of the Gulf Cartel.

#### War in the North and Expansion

After an initial setback in early 2010, when Los Zetas defended their organization from an alliance of three drug trafficking organizations stitched together by the Gulf Cartel, the former bodyguards surged back into the criminal underworld, with well established bases in Nuevo Laredo, Fresnillo, Veracruz, and in Coban, Guatemala. By late 2010, the organization was in position to get back to business with its extortion and taxation, as well as drug trafficking.

Los Zetas was never centrally focused on drug trafficking, although it has always been a part of the organization's business portfolio. As Los Zetas grew independent of the Gulf Cartel, the organization was at a disadvantage because it did not have contacts in Colombia or other Andean drug source countries. Trevino was the principal driver behind Los Zetas' movement into the cocaine business, largely because he was sitting on top of one of the

**"By the end of 2011, and despite ongoing spats with the Gulf Cartel, it was clear to analysts that Los Zetas had surpassed their former masters by becoming the second most powerful criminal organization in Mexico."**

most valuable pieces of smuggling real estate in the Americas. Nuevo Laredo was a direct shot along I-35 to one of the hottest drug markets in the United States: Chicago.

Trevino began as early as 2005 with steady shipments of cocaine and marijuana through Laredo and Houston, pushing his network east along I-40 and I-10, and north along I-35, extending as far north as Chicago, and east to Atlanta. He first used teenage hit men, known as *zetitas*, then settled on Texas-based street gangs, as well as the Mara Salvatrucha, which had a national presence, to move product downstream, and enforce the return of funds back into Mexico. The nature of the trafficking business

<sup>6</sup> George W. Grayson and Samuel Logan, *The Executioner's Men: Los Zetas, Rogue Soldiers, Criminal Entrepreneurs, and the Shadow State They Created* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2012).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Edward F. Fischer, "Guatemala and the Face of the New Sustainable Narco-State," Vanderbilt University, October 11, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Samuel Logan and John Sullivan, "The Gulf-Zeta Split and the Praetorian Revolt," ISN Security Watch, April 7, 2010.



spurred the development of Los Zetas-connected wholesale points across the United States, amounting to as many as 37 cities in the midwest, northeastern and southeastern regions of the United States by 2009, according to a leaked National Drug Intelligence Center situation report.<sup>10</sup>

Further evidence of Los Zetas' downstream operators in the United States surfaced in the wake of Operation Gator Bait, an October 2009 operation executed by the FBI that focused on a

### **“Nuevo Laredo was a direct shot along I-35 to one of the hottest drug markets in the United States: Chicago.”**

residence in Houston, Texas.<sup>11</sup> Willie “Gator” Jones Jr., the primary target, was employed by Los Zetas to operate a safe house to store drugs, guns, and weapons, and prepare drugs for downstream shipments on the I-10 corridor into Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida.

In a more recent case, police in Chicago and the Drug Enforcement Administration disrupted a “Chicago-based cell” on November 16, 2011.<sup>12</sup> Law enforcement seized more than \$12 million in cash and some 250 kilograms of cocaine. In a separate case, three alleged members of a Los Zetas hit-team attacked an undercover informant while he was delivering a truckload of marijuana outside of Houston in mid-November.<sup>13</sup> The relatively small amount on the trailer, some 300 pounds

of marijuana, led investigators to believe that the cell had targeted the load because the leader thought there was more merchandise aboard. It was an example of an unprecedented use of force and an indication of the ongoing feud between Los Zetas and their former masters in the Gulf Cartel, who investigators believe owned the load.

By the end of 2011, and despite ongoing spats with the Gulf Cartel, it was clear to analysts that Los Zetas had surpassed their former masters by becoming the second most powerful criminal organization in Mexico. Only the Sinaloa Cartel stood in the way of domination, although the paramilitary force apparently gained in influence across the country even as the Sinaloa Cartel lost footing, according to Mexican analysts.<sup>14</sup>

#### **Internal Split**

In 2010 and 2011, Los Zetas weathered a systematic attack from both rivals and the Mexican government that would have destroyed most criminal organizations. The strategic vision of its leader, Heriberto Lazcano, and the organization's ability to absorb loss even as it continues to recruit, train, and expand its presence into new territories are in part responsible for the organization's surprising survival. Looking ahead into 2012 and beyond, the organization's greatest battle will likely be fought not against the Sinaloa Cartel but between the two men who run the organization.

Los Zetas' number two in command, Miguel Trevino, is a former policeman based in Nuevo Laredo, and is considered to be an impulsive operator. Heriberto Lazcano, by contrast, is a military strategist focused on the core strength of his accounting methodology, on training and recruiting, and on staying alive. Invariably, the two men have grown apart, and some in Mexico believe that Trevino has grown tired of his second in command post. A series of arrests, where Mexican military patrols were able to capture high-ranking Los Zetas operators, has been considered the initial signs of Trevino leaking information on The Executioner's men in an attempt

to weaken Heriberto Lazcano's power within the organization.

Meanwhile, in the closing months of Mexican President Felipe Calderon's administration, he will push hard for a win against crime. Although the Los Zetas are powerful, they are the weaker of the two largest Mexican organizations, and therefore a low-hanging fruit.

As Calderon pushes hard to dismantle Los Zetas, evidenced by the January 13, 2012 arrest of Luis Jesus Sarabia Ramon, a high-ranking operator in the state of Nuevo Leon, the resulting stress on the organization, combined with the potential for Trevino to sabotage Lazcano, could force it to split into at least three separate mid-sized organizations: Los Zetas norte, Los Zetas central, and Los Zetas Guatemala. In the wake of such a split, Mexico could become more dangerous than ever as the leaders of Mexico's most violent organization fight for supremacy.

*Samuel Logan is an author, investigative journalist, and the Founding Director of Southern Pulse. From 1998 to 2009, Mr. Logan lived and worked in Central and South America. He is the author of This is for the Mara Salvatrucha (Hyperion, 2009), the co-author with Dr. George Grayson of The Executioner's Men (Transaction, forthcoming in March 2012), and is a National Geographic television story consultant. Mr. Logan has an MA in international policy studies, with a specialization in the economics of black markets from the Monterey Institute of International Studies. He is a regular speaker on organized crime, small arms and light weapons, corruption and drug trafficking.*

<sup>10</sup> “Cities Where Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations Operate Within the United States,” National Drug Intelligence Center, U.S. Department of Justice, April 2010. This document is available at [www.publicintelligence.net](http://www.publicintelligence.net).

<sup>11</sup> “Superseding Indictment in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in OCDETF ‘Operation Gator Bait’ Case,” press release, Federal Bureau of Investigation, October 2009.

<sup>12</sup> “Twenty Charged in Chicago with Various Drug Trafficking Offenses, Including Five Allegedly Tied to the Mexican ‘Zetas’ Cartel,” news release, Drug Enforcement Administration, November 16, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Dane Schiller, “Zeta Soldiers Launched Mexico-Style Attack in Harris County,” *Houston Chronicle*, November 23, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Geoffrey Ramsey, “Have the Zetas Replaced the Sinaloa as Mexico's Most Powerful Cartel?” *Insight Crime*, January 3, 2012.



## Hizb Allah's Counter-Intelligence War

By Benedetta Berti

IN NOVEMBER 2011, the international media reported that Hizb Allah (also transliterated as Hezbollah) uncovered a CIA-orchestrated network that had infiltrated the organization. The alleged spies had been collecting information concerning the group's operational capabilities and strategies, with the objective of sharing such information with U.S. and Israeli intelligence. The incident marked just the latest chapter in Hizb Allah's post-2006 counterintelligence war.<sup>1</sup>

This article revisits Hizb Allah's approach to counterintelligence in the post-2006 years, describing the group's alleged uncovering of internal double agents and external informants, while also analyzing the implications of this trend.

### Preparations for the "Next War":

#### The Counterintelligence Dimension

Hizb Allah's emphasis on counterintelligence and the group's borderline obsession with respect to potential foreign "spies" must be understood in the broader context of the group's preparation for the "next round" of hostilities with Israel.

Since the end of the war in 2006, Hizb Allah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah has made no mystery of his plans for the next war, specifying that the group has shifted its strategic focus from ending the "Israeli occupation" to a broader agenda that includes deterring future aggression as well as preventing interference from any country perceived as "hostile." Nasrallah has expressed this more ambitious posture on numerous occasions by asserting that the group's new doctrine would be centered around the concept of strategic parity and proportional retaliation. Thus, he reminded Israel that the new power equation would be "Tel Aviv for Beirut, and Ben Gurion International Airport for Beirut International Airport."<sup>2</sup>

Nasrallah emphasized this concept of strategic parity also in mid-February 2011 by stating that in the course of the next round of confrontation with Israel, Hizb Allah would respond to territorial invasion by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) with territorial invasion of its own—by sending Hizb Allah units to occupy the Galilee region.<sup>3</sup> These declarations exaggerate Hizb Allah's capabilities, but they are significant because they reveal both the group's renewed self-perception of power as well as its growing capabilities as a "hybrid army."<sup>4</sup> In turn, this concept refers to the fact that during the 2006 war some of the tactics employed by Hizb Allah were better suited to a regular army than to a guerrilla group.<sup>5</sup> Although the group continued to rely on traditional non-conventional tactics, it also adopted conventional military tactics, including defending and holding ground to both protect its rocket launching sites and prevent an Israeli reoccupation of Lebanon.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, as another new trend of the post-2006 years, Hizb Allah has become increasingly more ambitious in setting its goals for the next stage of military confrontation with Israel, openly referring to achieving a "decisive victory" against Israel during the "next war," a claim that both sets the

bar higher for Hizb Allah and raises the domestic as well as regional stakes in the next conflict.<sup>7</sup> In addition, this also suggests that Hizb Allah would use all of its capabilities to engage in an all-out war with Israel, trying to shift the theater of confrontation as much as possible into Israel proper and focusing even more on targeting Israeli civilians.

In this context, it is not surprising to observe that since 2006 Hizb Allah has actively engaged in rearming and regrouping, as well as in replenishing its stockpile of missiles, rockets and small arms,<sup>8</sup> while working on strengthening its military apparatus based on the lessons learned from the 2006 war.<sup>9</sup> In addition, Hizb Allah has focused on improving both its intelligence and counterintelligence capabilities. Regarding the former task, the group has attempted to improve knowledge of its main enemy, also through recruiting informants and attempting to establish spy rings within Israel.<sup>10</sup> With respect to counterintelligence, Hizb Allah has emphasized both the importance of preventing infiltration and leaks of information from within the organization, as well as the priority of further investing in its separate Iranian-sponsored fiber optic communications network—seeking to prevent the infiltration and disruption of its own communications system. In turn, these decisions were spurred by the fact that in 2006 Israel seemed to know more about the group's network than the organization was comfortable admitting.

7 Ibid.

8 Richard Beeston and Nicholas Blandford, "Hizballah Stockpiles 40,000 Rockets Near Israel Border," *The Times*, August 5, 2009.

9 Among these lessons, most prominent is the need to improve the group's vulnerability to airstrikes, to work on the accuracy of rockets, to increase, diversify, disperse, and better protect its arsenal, as well as to invest in more conventional training and to focus on holding terrain better, especially in non-urban areas. See also "Drums of War: Israel and the 'Resistance Axis,'" International Crisis Group, August 2, 2010; Jeffrey White, "If War Comes," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, September 2010; Bilal Y. Saab and Nicholas Blandford, "The Next War: How Another Conflict between Hizballah and Israel Could Look and How Both Sides are Preparing for It," Brookings Institution, August 2011.

10 Amir Kulick, "Israeli Arabs and Hizbollah's Covert War Against Israel," Institute for National Security Studies, September 10, 2009.

1 In 2006, Israel and Hizb Allah fought a war in southern Lebanon that ended in stalemate.

2 Bassem Mroue, "Nasrallah Warns Of Attack On Tel Aviv," Associated Press, July 28, 2009; "Nasrallah: If

You Strike Hariri Airport, We Will Strike Ben Gurion Airport," Lebanese National News Agency, February 16, 2010. Nasrallah said, "I say to the Israelis, not only if you hit the Suburb will we hit Tel Aviv, but also if you hit Martyr Rafik al-Hariri's Airport in Beirut, we will hit the Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv. If you hit our ports, we will hit yours. If you hit our oil refineries, we will hit yours. If you bomb our factories, we will bomb yours and if you bomb our power plants, we will bomb yours."

3 Dominic Evans, "Hizb Allah Chief Threatens To Seize Control Of Galilee," *National Post*, February 17, 2011.

4 Ralph Peters, "Lessons from Lebanon: The New Model Terrorist Army," *Armed Forces Journal International* 144:3 (2006).

5 Stephen Biddle and Jeffrey A. Friedman, "The 2006 Lebanon Campaign and The Future Of Warfare: Implications For Army And Defense Policy," Strategic Studies Institute, September 2008.

6 Secretary General Nasrallah explained this strategic shift in the aftermath of the 2006 war. He said that Hizb Allah went from being a popular resistance force to adopting "an unparalleled new school of warfare that functions as a combination of a regular army and guerrilla fighters." See Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, "The Hizbollah Project: Last War, Next War," OpenDemocracy.net, August 13, 2009.

To conduct counterintelligence, the group has relied specifically on an *ad hoc* secretive body created in the early 2000s to perform the role of internal watchdog, prevent infiltration, and enforce organizational security: the Counterintelligence Unit (*Amn al-Muddad*).<sup>11</sup> Relying on both signals intelligence through its sophisticated electronic apparatus, courtesy of Iran, as well as human intelligence, the group's efforts to pursue alleged double agents and prevent internal infiltration has taken a renewed, more aggressive, and increasingly public dimension in the post-2006 years. The peak of this trend was the November 2011 public exposure of an alleged "CIA spy ring" and the admission of internal infiltration into the organization.

#### The Public Counterintelligence Campaign

Hizb Allah's alleged uncovering of a CIA spy ring in 2011 was frequently portrayed in the international press as a groundbreaking and exceptional event. It would be incorrect, however, to describe it as a "one-time" exceptional occurrence. Instead, this "CIA scandal" should be read as part of Hizb Allah's aggressive campaign to publicize its targeting of alleged "spies and informants" operating within Lebanon. In turn, this campaign—which has been important in the aftermath of the July 2006 war—picked up momentum in 2009. From April 2009 until today, in fact, Lebanese authorities in cooperation with Hizb Allah claim to have arrested more than 100 individuals on suspicion of collaborating with foreign intelligence agencies (the CIA and the Mossad).<sup>12</sup> Those arrested have included "fake" Hizb Allah sympathizers and donors, businessmen, politicians, telecommunications workers, as well as internal and military security personnel. Although Lebanon has always worried about the issue of "foreign spies," such cases were few between the Israeli withdrawal in 2000 and the 2006 war.<sup>13</sup>

11 "Hizbollah: Rebel Without A Cause?" International Crisis Group, July 30, 2003.

12 "Israeli Spy Suspect Arrested in Beirut," al-Manar, April 6, 2011; "Swoop on 'CIA Spies' Sets Back Hezbollah," United Press International, June 27, 2011; "American Spies Ousted, CIA Suffers in Lebanon," *Washington Post*, November 21, 2011.

13 Between 2000 and 2006, the main spy cases included the discovery of an alleged 12-person spy ring in March

One of the first such cases occurred in the immediate aftermath of the July 2006 war, when an inspector of Sûreté Générale (Lebanon's "General Security" intelligence agency) was detained under suspicion of collaborating with Israeli intelligence.<sup>14</sup> This episode was followed by the arrests of brothers

**"In June 2011, Hizb Allah directly revealed that it had found a spy cell operating within its own ranks, and that the suspected spies included more than five Hizb Allah members."**

Yusef and Ali Jarrah from the eastern Bekaa region, under suspicion of having been in contact with Israeli intelligence since the 1980s.<sup>15</sup> Pre-July 2006, such cases were sparse.

Subsequently, the pace of the investigations picked up in the winter of 2009, when an employee of Middle East Airlines—also suspected of spying for Israel—went missing, while a suspected agent from Southern Lebanon was detained by Lebanese authorities.<sup>16</sup> The case of Marwan Faqih, the owner of a garage near Nabatiyah in south Lebanon, was particularly interesting since the suspected "spy" had over the decades developed a close connection with Hizb Allah, and had therefore been granted some degree of access to the organization. In turn, this represented the first—albeit not yet substantial—blow to the group's reputation of total

2001, the uncovering of a three-person alleged spy ring in February 2002, and the indictment of four individuals in 2004. For details, see "Lebanon: Security Source Says 'Israeli Spies' Monitored Palestinian Centres," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, March 9, 2001; "Lebanese Intelligence Arrests Three Alleged Spies for Israel," *Tele-Liban*, February 26, 2002; Zeina Karam, "Lebanon Indicts Five as Israeli Spies," *Jerusalem Post*, June 17, 2004.

14 Ali al-Musawi, "An Inspector in General Security Apprehended for Spying on Hezbollah," al-Manar, February 28, 2007.

15 "Lebanon Prosecutor Seeks Execution of Israel Spies," BBC Monitoring Middle East, March 17, 2009.

16 Nicholas Blanford, "War of the Spies as Enemies Prepare for Next Confrontation," *The Times*, February 23, 2009.

unity and cohesion and to its alleged "invulnerability" to infiltration. Not surprisingly, in the aftermath of the Faqih case, reports in the Arab press asserted that Hizb Allah had been forced to relocate some of its weapons and rockets out of arms caches deemed as compromised.<sup>17</sup>

The spring of 2009 was similarly eventful for Hizb Allah, which—again cooperating with Lebanese intelligence—helped uncover three alleged "spy rings" active in the general security apparatus, raising a public debate within Lebanon (at times bordering paranoia) over the extent of the so-called "infiltration."<sup>18</sup>

The next main event in the "spies chronology" was the arrest of Charbel Qazzi, a technician in Alfa, one of the two local mobile phone companies, again on the suspicion of collaborating with Israel.<sup>19</sup> In turn, this event was important for Hizb Allah because it helped the group boost its campaign to tarnish the reputation of the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon, tasked with investigating the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. Indeed, Hizb Allah used the arrest of the Alfa technician to question the tribunal's reliance on phone records acquired through Alfa during the course of the investigations.<sup>20</sup> If Alfa had been "infiltrated," then the records offered by the company were not valid, claimed Hizb Allah, thus using the arrest as a means to instill doubt over the credibility of the special tribunal's evidence.

Following the Alfa investigation, Lebanon's focus on finding "foreign agents" did not decline. In December 2010, Lebanon again claimed to have found Israeli "spying devices" within

17 "Lebanese Hezbollah Moves Weapons, Investigates Members after Leaks," al-Arabiya, March 24, 2009.

18 Batul Wahbah, "Hezbollah, ISF Cooperating to Nab Israeli Spy Cells," al-Manar, April 17, 2009; "Lebanese Authorities Said to Have Arrested Two Members of 'Zionist Spy Network,'" al-Manar, April 25, 2009; "Three More Spy Suspects Arrested in Lebanon," al-Manar, June 3, 2009.

19 Ibrahim al-Amin, "Arrest of Lebanese Employee Suspected of Being an Israeli Agent," *Asharq al-Awsat*, July 29, 2010.

20 "Lebanese Figures React to Hezbollah Leader's Speech on Tribunal, Spies," Lebanese National News Agency, July 17, 2010.

its territory, leading both to the arrests of suspected “collaborators” as well as to Lebanon filing a complaint at the UN Security Council.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the domestic relevance of these episodes, the real event that truly changed the narrative over the issue was the June 2011 report over the direct infiltration of “agents” within the ranks of Hizb Allah proper. In June, Hizb Allah directly revealed that it had found a spy cell operating within its own ranks, and that the suspected spies included more than five Hizb Allah members.<sup>22</sup> In the words of Nasrallah, these alleged spies had been recruited by the CIA, a claim promptly denied by U.S. officials in Beirut, and their work would have benefited the United States and Israel,<sup>23</sup> an argument central to Hizb Allah’s ongoing anti-American propaganda.

These reports contributed to questions over Hizb Allah’s reputation in terms of its unity and cohesion, as for the first time the group admitted to being infiltrated. In this context, when in September 2011 new reports in the Arab press stated that Hizb Allah had uncovered five additional suspected “Israeli” spies operating within its own ranks, the Shi’a organization was quick to dismiss the reports as “fabrications,” likely to mitigate the perception that there had been a repeated security breach.<sup>24</sup> In November 2011, however, the group took the opposite stand and openly announced that it had foiled another internal infiltration, unmasking Hizb Allah members who had been allegedly serving as CIA informants,

an announcement again denied by U.S. official authorities in Lebanon, but confirmed unofficially from within the ranks of the local staff.<sup>25</sup>

In turn, the announcement created an unprecedented internal debate within Lebanon, leading the government to summon the U.S. ambassador in Beirut Maura Connelly to question her over the incident.<sup>26</sup>

#### Significance and Implications

Although open source intelligence is not sufficient to reach a definitive conclusion regarding the actual extent and impact of the so-called “spy files,” the fact that the debate over the existence of such networks has been widely reported in the Lebanese media is a significant fact worth analyzing.

In this context, a consideration is that in disclosing such information, Hizb Allah is carefully balancing between its mutually exclusive need to boost its reputation by promoting its alleged achievements, its desire to employ the “spy” tool to improve its campaign against the United States (and the U.S. presence in Lebanon), and its equally important organizational need to preserve its reputation of unity, cohesion, and strength.

First, the renewed effort to publicize the achievements of the counterintelligence war is part of Hizb Allah’s psychological campaign to project power and discredit the intelligence apparatus of its main enemies. In other words, Hizb Allah’s direct benefit in making the “spy” issue public is to get “bragging rights.” In the words of Hassan Fadlallah during a post-CIA scandal press conference, the operation “reveals the size of the achievement that was made by the resistance through its persistent work to protect national security and fight the US and Israeli espionage.”<sup>27</sup> Deputy Kamil al-Rafei of Hizb Allah’s parliamentary bloc similarly stated that the November 2011 operation was the result of a very well-planned strategy, adding that in the future the party

would re-double its efforts in stopping future infiltration.<sup>28</sup>

Second, from the viewpoint of a Hizb Allah member, the CIA agents were indeed spying for Israel, showing that the country was not able to collect information directly and that it had to rely on the Americans to get much needed intelligence on Nasrallah’s organization. This was not the first time Hizb Allah had argued that the American presence in Lebanon was a hostile one, and that the U.S. Embassy in Beirut was a “Trojan horse” to spy on Lebanon on behalf of Israel.<sup>29</sup> In turn, this point is particularly important as it allows

**“The revelations of the alleged infiltration of Hizb Allah have also had a second, negative outcome for the organization: they have contributed to tarnishing the group’s aura of invulnerability and its myth of total internal cohesion.”**

Hizb Allah to simultaneously promote its self-proclaimed role as “national defender,” while also questioning the country’s alliance with the United States. By denouncing the alleged spy ring as a “flagrant assault on Lebanon’s sovereignty by U.S. intelligence,”<sup>30</sup> both Amal and Hizb Allah were questioning the strategic relevance of Lebanon’s alliance with the United States, criticizing the March 14 political opposition’s pro-Western stance.

21 “Beirut Files Complaint to UN Against ‘Israeli Spy Devices.’ Lebanese Media say Equipment is Not New and May Have Been Planted with Help from ‘Collaborators,’” *Jerusalem Post*, December 19, 2010; “Report: New Espionage Devices Dismantled, Suspected Spies Arrested,” *al-Manar*, December 28, 2010.

22 Sa’d Elias, “What is Behind the Report Over Arrest of Infiltrated Hezbollah Group?” *al-Quds al-Arabi*, June 23, 2011; “Shock Inside of Hezbollah Over Quantitative and Quality Israeli Infiltration of its Ranks,” *al-Rai al-Aam*, June 26, 2011.

23 “Swoop on ‘CIA Spies’ Sets Back Hezbollah,” *United Press International*, June 27, 2011; “Lebanon: Hezbollah says it Captured C.I.A. Spies,” *Associated Press*, June 24, 2011.

24 “Information on Uncovering of Five Israeli Spies Inside Hezbollah,” *Asharq al-Awsat*, September 23, 2011; “Hezbollah Denies Reports About Arrest of New ‘Spies,’” *al-Manar*, September 23, 2011.

25 “American Spies Ousted, CIA Suffers in Lebanon,” *Washington Post*, November 21, 2011.

26 “Lebanon to Summon U.S. Envoy Over ‘CIA Operatives,’” *al-Arabiya*, November 24, 2011.

27 “News Conference by Hezbollah MP Hasan Fadlallah on CIA,” *al-Manar*, November 23, 2011.

28 Paula Astih, “Deputy of Hezbollah Told Asharq al-Awsat: The Discovery of the CIA Agents was not a Coincidence Fluke, but a Deliberate Process,” *Asharq al-Awsat*, November 23, 2011.

29 Already in June 2011, Nasrallah had stated: “when the Israeli enemy failed to infiltrate Hezbollah, it turned to the most powerful intelligence agency [a reference to the CIA].” See “Hezbollah Arrests 4 Israeli Agents Whilst Fifth Escapes – Sources,” *Asharq Al-Awsat*, September 23, 2011.

30 “Hezbollah, Amal Urge Authorities to Counter Espionage by CIA,” *The Daily Star*, November 25, 2011.



Third, although it is promoting the alleged achievements of the “resistance,” it is treading a thin line by openly addressing the issue of infiltration. Indeed, although the group wants to promote its counterintelligence capabilities, it also wants to preserve its reputation of cohesion and unity, and to downplay the level of internal defection. In fact, since the aftermath of the 2006 war, the group’s reputation for invulnerability has taken a series of important hits: first, with the 2008 assassination of Imad Mughniyyeh in Damascus, and then with the repeated reports of internal infiltration, first revealed in June 2011. At the time, Nasrallah’s revelations were quite explosive, going against his earlier claims that Hizb Allah was immune to infiltration, and somewhat tarnishing the group’s “aura.”<sup>31</sup> In fact, before June 2011 all the previous arrests of spies within Lebanon did not directly involve people from within the ranks of the organization. This is not to say that such cases had not existed before, but rather that the organization had previously chosen to keep them secret. To counter the perception of internal weakness stemming from the alleged internal breaches, Hizb Allah has worked to downplay their size, minimizing the number and rank of officials involved, and also arguing that in many cases the alleged “spies” were not in fact directly affiliated with Nasrallah’s group.

At the same time, news reports from the Arab world have focused on grasping the consequences of exposing the alleged spy rings. Accordingly, Hizb Allah—known to take internal security seriously—has undertaken an in-depth investigation of its rank-and-file to prevent further cases of collaborators and double agents, leading to the removal of some high-level officials over their alleged inefficiency in preventing infiltration, while openly tackling the previously unmentioned issue of internal corruption.<sup>32</sup> While it is impossible to conduct a precise assessment of the actual extent of the infiltration and the related measures undertaken by the group, it remains clear that the uncovering of the security

breaches represented an important event in Hizb Allah’s recent history, one that will make it focus even more on the counterintelligence war and on preparations for the “next war.”

#### Conclusion

Since 2006, Hizb Allah has stepped up its counterintelligence war. Hizb Allah has been using the recent “CIA scandals” to reinforce its anti-American position and to once more question the strategic value of the Lebanese alliance with the United States, arguing that the CIA was operating as a spying proxy for Israel’s Mossad and that, in light of this event, the Lebanese government should review its foreign policy relationships.

In addition to this “positive” function, however, the revelations of the alleged infiltration of Hizb Allah have also had a second, negative outcome for the organization: they have contributed to tarnishing the group’s aura of invulnerability and its myth of total internal cohesion. Even though Hizb Allah has attempted to diminish the impact of the internal breaches by downplaying their size and magnitude, it is fair to assess that the revelations have been damaging.

Even so, the disclosure of the alleged uncovering of both Israeli and American agents over the past few years sends Israel a powerful reminder of the effectiveness and determination of Hizb Allah, as well as its renewed focus on counterintelligence. In turn, it is likely that, in the next round of hostilities between Israel and Hizb Allah, this front will play an increasingly important role.

*Benedetta Berti is a research fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies, a lecturer at Tel Aviv University and the coauthor of Hamas and Hezbollah: A Comparative Study (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).*

## Afghanistan’s Conflict Minerals: The Crime-State-Insurgent Nexus

By Matthew DuPée

AFGHANISTAN IS MOST notoriously recognized for its cultivation and production of illegal narcotics, recently galvanizing its position as the world’s number one producer of illicit opium and cannabis resin (hashish). Yet there exists an equally thriving shadow economy revolving around precious stones such as emeralds, lapis lazuli, and increasingly from minerals and ores such as chromite, coal, gold and iron.<sup>1</sup>

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Defense released its findings from a geological survey that confirmed Afghanistan’s untapped mineral reserves are worth an astounding \$1 trillion.<sup>2</sup> Wahidullah Shahrani, the current Afghan minister for mines, claimed that other geological assessments and industry reports place Afghanistan’s mineral wealth at \$3 trillion or more.<sup>3</sup> Past wars, contemporary conflict and the subsequent influx of international assistance, however, has forced all development and reconstruction efforts to unfold in a highly criminalized political and economic space—including Afghanistan’s immature yet promising mining sector.

This article examines the evolution of natural resource exploitation by various violent entrepreneurs—such as local *kachakbarari* (smuggling) networks,

1 Afghanistan is ranked the world’s largest producer of illicit opiates, supplying approximately 90% of the illicit global demand for the past eight years in a row. The first UNODC Afghan Cannabis Survey published in 2010 confirmed suspicions that Afghanistan is now the world’s largest producer of cannabis resin, better known as hashish, accounting for approximately 1,500 to 3,500 metric tons of resin in 2009, and upwards of 3,700 metric tons in 2010.

2 James Risen, “U.S. Identifies Vast Mineral Riches in Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, June 13, 2010. The \$1 trillion estimate derived from Stephen G. Peters, Trude V.V. King, Thomas J. Mack, and Michael P. Chornack, “Summaries of Important Areas for Mineral Investment and Production Opportunities of Nonfuel Minerals in Afghanistan,” U.S. Geological Survey, September 29, 2011.

3 Deb Reichman and Amir Shah, “Afghan Mineral Wealth May Be At Least \$3 Trillion,” Associated Press, June 17, 2010.

31 Sa’d Elias, “What is Behind the Report Over Arrest of Infiltrated Hezbollah Group?” *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, June 30, 2011.

32 “The Trials of the Corrupt and the Silent Liquidations Within the Party,” *As-Seyassah*, November 23, 2011.



corrupt powerbrokers, and insurgent groups such as the Taliban, the Haqqani network, and their Pakistani counterparts—in the period before and during Afghanistan's contemporary conflict. Understanding this connection is important since state, criminal and insurgent elements on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border continue to reap profits from illegal excavations, protection rackets, informal taxation, and cross-border trafficking. This nexus is helping create new forms of state and private patronage systems as the realms of business, crime, conflict and corruption intersect in the already convoluted war economy of Afghanistan.

#### Origins of Illegal Mining and Smuggling in Afghanistan

The small-scale excavation and trafficking of precious stones and other mining commodities such as chromite, marble, and coal has long played a role in organized criminal activities and fundraising strategies for militant groups throughout the past four decades of conflict in Afghanistan. In general, the smuggling of contraband constitutes an enduring Afghan economic legacy: smuggling comprised as much as 20-25% of Afghanistan's total foreign trade in the early 1970s.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast to smuggling, the development of Afghanistan's exceedingly vast yet complex array of mineral reserves has been handicapped by its landlocked position, inefficient governance and corruption, lack of critical and modern infrastructure such as railways and highways, and its vulnerability to earthquakes, which hampers long-term geological extraction. Although the United Kingdom, United States, France, Sweden, Japan, and Russia have all engaged in resource exploration throughout Afghanistan since a British expedition first uncovered Afghan mineral wealth in 1815, these efforts largely failed except for the limited extraction of oil, natural gas, salt, coal, marble, and lapis lazuli precious stones.<sup>5</sup>

4 Jagdish Bhagwati and Bent Hansen, "A Theoretical Analysis of Smuggling," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 87:2 (1973).

5 John F. Shroder, Jr., "Physical Resources and the Development of Afghanistan," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 16:3-4 (1981).

Following the Saur (April) Revolution of 1978, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the following year led to the onset of a nationwide civil war, which engulfed Afghanistan from 1980 until the collapse of the Afghan regime in 1992.<sup>6</sup> Afghanistan's litany of resistance forces, collectively known

### **"Bordering the restive tribal areas of Pakistan, Khost Province is home to a number of criminal mining syndicates, many of which specialize in the surface extraction of chromite."**

as mujahidin, soon developed a variety of state and private patronage sources, and engaged in multiple licit and illicit fundraising efforts to help bolster their war chests. The mining and extraction of lapis lazuli, world-class emeralds, and other precious gemstones in the northern provinces of Badakhshan and the Panjshir Valley became a critical source of revenue for the Jamaat-i-Islami resistance movement, one of the seven largest mujahidin parties that fought against the Soviet occupation. When Jamaat-i-Islami came to power in 1992, Afghan Defense Minister Ahmad Shah Massoud nationalized these mines, and through the assistance of a Polish company (Intercommerce) collected an estimated \$200 million a year from the trade in precious gemstones.<sup>7</sup>

6 The civil war continued through 1992 and into 1994, ushering in a new era of chaos, war, and destruction that prompted the rise of the Taliban movement in southern Afghanistan in 1994. The small band of religious warriors quickly gained popular support by restoring law and order by disarming violent and illegally armed groups. By 1996, the Taliban controlled nearly 85% of Afghanistan's territory, including the capital, Kabul.

7 Conrad Schetter, "The 'Bazaar Economy' of Afghanistan: A Comprehensive Approach," in Christine Noelle-Karimi, Conrad Schetter and Reinhard Schlagintweit eds., *Afghanistan – A Country without a State?* (Frankfurt: IKO Verlag, 2002).

Emerald mining in the Panjshir Valley became a critical component of the war economy around 1985, with most of the lucrative extraction centered on the village of Khenj, an area then under the control of the local Jamaat commander Bismillah Khan.<sup>8</sup>

Following the rise of the Taliban movement in 1994 and their seizure of state power in 1996, anti-Taliban militias came to unite under the umbrella group the United Islamic Front. The United Islamic Front continued to engage in precious stone extraction and trafficking in the Panjshir Valley, Takhar, and Badakhshan, allegedly earning between \$60 and \$200 million per year from the trade.<sup>9</sup> These anti-Taliban militias led by Ahmad Shah Massoud would eventually acquire weapons, ammunition, and even helicopters to fight against the Taliban from legendary black market arms dealer Viktor Bout—exchanging emeralds and other precious stones for weapons under a "commodity for commodity" agreement.<sup>10</sup>

The resistance by no means monopolized the extraction of precious stones and other commodities. The state power at the time, the Taliban regime, also engaged in simple and unskilled mining efforts during their tenure between 1996 and 2001. In 1997, the Taliban commander in charge of the government-owned marble mines in Helmand Province employed some 500 laborers armed only with primitive hand tools, extracting the marble through rudimentary blasting, subsequently scarring the finished product which substantially reduced its worth.<sup>11</sup> The

8 Khan emerged as a key commander for Ahmad Shah Massoud and later became the army chief of staff in the post-Taliban regime, ultimately being appointed as the interior minister for the Karzai administration in 2010. See "The Massoud Memorial Mining Institute 8<sup>th</sup> Draft Proposal," GeoVision Inc., December 19, 2002.

9 Michael Renner, "The Anatomy of Resource Wars," World Watch Paper #162, October 2002; Schetter.

10 Douglas Farah and Stephen Braun, *Merchant of Death: Money, Guns, Planes and the Man Who Makes War Possible* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley and Sons Press, 2007); Camelia Entekhabi-Fard, "Northern Alliance Veteran Hopes Emeralds Are Key Part of Afghanistan's Economic Recovery," Eurasianet.org, October 14, 2002.

11 Ahmed Rashid, *The Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

widespread phenomenon of unskilled, unregulated, largely localized mining efforts inside and outside of state control continued unabated during this period, with United Islamic Front commanders operating nearly 100 emerald mines in the Panjshir Valley alone.

#### The Contemporary Flow of Illicit Minerals

The illegal acquisition and seizure of land, black market mining, and the trafficking of these resources surged following the collapse of the Taliban regime in November 2001. In 2005, the Afghan Ministry for Mines and Industries indicated nearly 80% of all Afghan mines remained under control of rogue commanders or criminals, with some of these mines being controlled by non-state actors since 1992.<sup>12</sup> Several of Afghanistan's most contested and insurgent plagued areas—such as Khost, Ghazni, Logar, Paktia, and Baghlan provinces—also contain large mineral deposits and precious stone mines.

Bordering the restive tribal areas of Pakistan, Khost Province is home to a number of criminal mining syndicates, many of which specialize in the surface extraction of chromite.<sup>13</sup> In May 2010, the director of Khost's mining department, Engineer Laiq, admitted the provincial government has failed to prevent the smuggling and illegal extraction of Khost's chromite ore despite the presence of 300 armed security guards tasked with securing the mines.<sup>14</sup> Afghan security officials indicate these syndicates are small in number, namely a few large families, who smuggle the ore across the border to Pakistan where members of the Wazir tribe buy and trade the mineral to international customers. Analysts previously speculated that the illegal extraction of chromite in Khost amounts to nearly 20 million Afghanis (\$413,907) per year, although the Afghan government believes it loses one million Afghanis (\$20,695) in lost revenue from illegal chromite excavations in Khost each day.<sup>15</sup> Besides

lost revenue, the Afghan government faces a growing threat from the merger between corrupt business elites and local criminal syndicates who outsource chromite smuggling operations and pay "protection" fees to members of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Haqqani network affiliates to ensure that the movement of illegally mined chromites reach market destinations in Pakistan without interference.

The most powerful of these syndicates was led by a licit and licensed mining company that excavated chromite ore in Khost for three years without paying royalties to the government, and used a network of local smugglers from the Tanai tribe to illegally smuggle the ore to North Waziristan where members of the TTP would ensure the convoys were safely escorted in exchange for a payment.<sup>16</sup>

Many of those involved in the smuggling include members of the Zadran tribe, the same tribal affiliation of the much vaunted Haqqani network, while those in charge of chromite trading belong to the Madda Khel clan of the Utman Wazir tribe, the same tribe and clan of wanted Taliban commander Hafiz Gul Bahadar.<sup>17</sup> These connections have not been lost on security forces operating in eastern Afghanistan who face a multifaceted threat from local Taliban insurgents being supplied with deadly improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers from Hafiz Gul Bahadar and the Haqqani network, as well as the TTP.

Between March and October 2011, at least two U.S. drone strikes targeted Taliban fighters who were loyal to Pakistani Taliban commander Hafiz Gul Bahadar and linked to the smuggling and trading of chromite. On March

17, two U.S. missiles slammed into a compound in the Nawai Adda area of North Waziristan, reportedly killing more than 40 Madda Khel tribesmen and Taliban fighters attending a *jirga* (tribal meeting) to help resolve a dispute between two parties over the sale of a chromite mine that cost approximately \$100,000.<sup>18</sup> Among the dead was Sherabat Khan, a senior deputy to Hafiz Gul Bahadar, who was sent to mediate the dispute on behalf of the Taliban. On October 31, up to four missiles fired from a U.S. drone killed four men, including a local chromite trader named Saeedur Rahman, in the Doga Madakhel village in North Waziristan—an area located in the Dattakhel *tehsil* that is controlled by Hafiz Gul Bahadar.<sup>19</sup>

Bordering Khost is Zormat district of Paktia Province, another major hub in the trade of illicit minerals (and narcotics) in eastern Afghanistan. Situated between some of the largest chromite deposits in Afghanistan, namely the Deh Yak district of Ghazni Province and the Dadukhel desert of Logar, Zormat is a hotly contested district where locally operated smuggling syndicates—and linked to those in Khost—dictate the flow of illicit goods destined for larger markets outside the province and in neighboring Pakistan.

In Logar Province, there are approximately 20 precious stone mines in addition to the massive Anyak copper mine.<sup>20</sup> Among these are the massive surface deposits of chromite in the Dadukhel desert, located approximately 10 kilometers east of the provincial capital of Pul-i-Alam. In 2006, hundreds of armed men were reportedly extracting chromite ore from the Dadukhel area at night; they smuggled the ore to Gardez and on through the Jaji district of Paktia for destinations in Parachinar, Pakistan.<sup>21</sup>

12 "Operation 'Sarmaaayey Melee' (National Treasure)," Human Terrain Team Assessment, January 2008.

16 Personal interview, Javed Noorani, an Afghan extractive industries analyst, January 7, 2012.

17 The Haqqani clan is part of the Mezi sub-tribe of the Zadran, and Hafiz Gul Bahadar is a senior tribal leader of the Utman Wazir. Personal interview, government official from Khost who spoke on condition of anonymity, January 6, 2012; Saida Sulaiman and Syed Adnan Ali Shah Bukhari, "Hafiz Gul Bahadur: A Profile of the Leader of the North Waziristan Taliban," *Terrorism Monitor* 7:9 (2009).

18 "80 People Reportedly Killed in U.S. Drone Strike in Pakistan," Xinhua, March 17, 2011.

19 Malik Mumtaz Khan, "Four Miners Killed in North Waziristan Drone Attack," *The News International*, October 31, 2011.

20 According to the late Abdullah Wardak, who served as the governor of Logar until he was assassinated in 2008, there are 20 functioning mines in Logar. Kabir Haqmal, "Precious Stones are Illegally Extracted in Afghanistan," BBC Pashto, June 3, 2008.

21 Shah Pur Arab, "Feature: Illegal Excavations of Chromites in Logar," Pajhwok Afghan News, December 21,

12 "The Afghan Government has no Control over Mines," Pajhwok Afghan News, April 14, 2005.

13 Chromite, an ore used as a hardening agent in the manufacturing of steel, is found predominately in Tanai, Jaji, and Mangal districts of Khost, the Deh Yak district of Ghazni, and the Dadukhel area in Logar.

14 Saboor Mangal, "Illegal Mining Continues in Khost," Pajhwok Afghan News, May 25, 2010.

15 Michael Bhatia, Tom Garcia, and MSG Rachel Ride-

Smugglers in this area often hide their haul of chromite under loads of timber, nearly all of which is bound for *bara* (contraband) markets in Pakistan. By September 2010, the Afghan Ministry for Mines acknowledged that efforts to secure the chromite fields in Logar have failed just as they have in Khost, with an estimated 400 tons of the precious ore smuggled out of the country every day, in part because the provincial governor and chief of police continue to play integral roles in the area's black market chromite trade.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to chromite extraction and smuggling, small and medium scale unlicensed extraction of coal in the central provinces of Bamyan and Baghlan has also bolstered the war chests of local smuggling syndicates and criminal networks. In July 2011, local Afghan media reports suggested that among the 100 coal mines functioning in the central province of Bamyan, the government only controls and operates six of them.<sup>23</sup> Gold, rubies, and emerald extraction continues through unlicensed operators connected to powerful business and political elites in Takhar, Badakhshan, Nuristan, Baghlan, and Panjshir provinces.

### Conclusion

Amidst the headlines of several lucrative mining contracts signed between Afghanistan and multiple international mining firms from China and India, the proliferation of illegal excavations by violent entrepreneurs threatens and stunts the natural growth of Afghanistan's burgeoning mining sector. In May 2011, Afghanistan's parliament cited security shortcomings, infrastructure and technicality problems as the most serious obstacles in developing Afghanistan's mining sector. "Mafia groups are making use of mines more

than the Afghan government," Gul Ahmad Azimi, an Afghan senator, said during the session.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, corrupt government officials (at all levels) and illicit business practices, such as paying bribes, also exacerbate the situation. In the summer of 2009, the rate for government security forces to "protect" smugglers and their convoys in Ghazni Province reportedly ranged between \$400 and \$2,000 per truck. Similar stories were also reported in Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan, Khost and Logar provinces in late 2011.<sup>25</sup>

As the internal revenue streams funding militant and criminal groups continue to change, armed groups will rely upon a diverse array of income generation that includes illegal mining, the smuggling of these minerals and other contraband, collecting illegal taxes, and offering protection for the trafficking of these illicit "conflict minerals." Given the examples of illegal mining in Khost, Logar, and Paktia, it is clear the predatory and parasitic exploitation of Afghanistan's mineral reserves by opportunistic and violent entrepreneurs will continue to enhance the war chests of armed belligerents and fuel corruption for the foreseeable future.

*Matthew C. DuPée is an Afghanistan analyst for the U.S. Defense Department and previously served as a research associate at the Naval Postgraduate School's Remote Sensing Center and for the Program for Culture & Conflict Studies. He holds an M.A. in Regional Security Studies (South Asia) from the Naval Postgraduate School and continues his research on organized crime, insurgency, illegal mineral extraction, and the narcotics industry in Southwest Asia.*

## The Complicated Relationship Between the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban

By Daud Khattak

IN LATE 2011, the outlook for negotiations between the United States and the Afghan Taliban began to improve. Various reports suggested that the Afghan Taliban were close to establishing a liaison office in Doha, Qatar, from where the group could negotiate with those actors involved in the Afghanistan war.<sup>1</sup> At the same time that the initiative gained steam, however, the Pakistani Taliban purportedly released a dramatic statement that it would cease attacks on Pakistani targets, join forces with the Afghan Taliban and focus all of its insurgent activity on U.S. and international forces in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> Yet hours after that statement was released, a spokesman for Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)<sup>3</sup> rejected reports of an agreement to end attacks on Pakistani troops. Instead, several spectacular attacks were staged in the following days, including the brutal killing of 10 Pakistani Frontier Constabulary soldiers.<sup>4</sup> This series of events just added to the confusion inherent in the decade-long war in Afghanistan.

This article will provide clarity on the composition of the Pakistani Taliban, identifying its various factions. It will also shed light on the relationship between the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban. The article concludes with a discussion of both the short- and long-term implications of the purported U.S.-Taliban peace talks on Pakistan.

2006; Shah Pur Arab, "Afghan Police Arrest 16 as Hundreds Embark on Chromite Mining," Pajhwok Afghan News, December 23, 2006; Shah Pur Arab, "20 Tons of Chromites Recovered in Logar," Pajhwok Afghan News, March 29, 2008.

22 "Tonnes of Chromite Daily Smuggled out of Afghanistan," ToloNews, September 6, 2010; "Logar Residents Rally Against Governor," *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, April 20, 2011; personal interview, Javed Noorani, an Afghan extractive industries analyst, January 7, 2012.

23 Hadi Ghafari, "Child Labor Exploited in Bamyan Coal Mines," Pajhwok Afghan News, July 12, 2011.

24 "Afghanistan Unable to Use Mines: Senate House," ToloNews, May 31, 2011.

25 Richard A. Oppel, "Corruption Undercuts Hopes for Afghan Police," *New York Times*, April 8, 2009; personal interview, Javed Noorani, an Afghan extractive industries analyst, January 7, 2012.

1 Matthew Rosenberg and Sharifullah Sahak, "Karzai Agrees to Let Taliban Set Up Office in Qatar," *New York Times*, December 27, 2011.

2 The statement reportedly had the support of the Haqqani network, the Maulvi Nazir group, the Hakimullah Mehsud group, and the Maulana Waliur Rahman group. See "Reports: Afghan, Pakistani Militants Unite to Fight US-led Troops in Afghanistan," *Voice of America*, January 2, 2012.

3 Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is a conglomerate of several militant factions based in Waziristan and headed by Hakimullah Mehsud.

4 "Bodies of 10 FC Soldiers Recovered from Orakzai," *Dawn*, January 9, 2012.



### The Pakistani Taliban: A United Force?

Most of the Pakistani Taliban factions operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan have sanctuaries in Pakistan's North and South Waziristan, located in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Although nearly half of the factions are gathered under the TTP umbrella, some are loosely affiliated with the group while others have little or no association.<sup>5</sup> Even the TTP itself, once united under its leader Baitullah Mehsud, is fragmented and its existing leadership regularly disagrees over control of territory.<sup>6</sup>

Various Pakistani Taliban leaders also do not share the same war strategy. For example, the Pakistani Taliban faction in Bajaur Agency, led by Maulvi Faqir Muhammad, did not protest when Pakistan's military launched a series of operations against Pakistani

**“In the meantime, Pakistan will not relinquish its long-term interests in Afghanistan and the region, and it will likely continue to view the Afghan Taliban as one of the country’s strategic assets.”**

Taliban factions in South Waziristan Agency in October 2009. Rather, Faqir Muhammad announced that he was holding peace talks with the Pakistani government in December.<sup>7</sup> Such statements regularly create confusion over the true intentions of the Pakistani Taliban. In this particular case, analysts were especially perplexed because Faqir Muhammad is, at least on paper, the deputy head of the TTP—the group that

was engaged with Pakistan's military in South Waziristan at the time. In fact, when Faqir Muhammad announced the peace agreement, other TTP leaders rejected his statement, saying that it only reflected his “personal” opinion. The spokesman of the TTP went further, arguing that Faqir had nothing to do with the organization's central leadership.<sup>8</sup>

In the same token, key Waziristan-based Pakistani Taliban leaders, such as Hafiz Gul Bahadar and Maulvi Nazir, do not approve of the TTP's policies of waging war against Pakistani security forces. These two leaders, who are not part of the TTP, are focused on fighting U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, they are considered the TTP's “brothers in arms” and are described as members of the Pakistani Taliban. Gul Bahadar and Maulvi Nazir also have peace agreements with the Pakistani government.

The two key unifying factors keeping all the disparate Pakistani Taliban factions from fighting each other are their struggle for survival in the face of numerous military operations—from the Pakistani military and U.S. drone aircraft—as well as the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup>

### The Relationship Between the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban

The Afghan Taliban do not engage in attacks in Pakistan. Its efforts are focused on fighting Afghan and international troops in Afghanistan. Yet despite their differences, all of the Pakistani Taliban factions—even those that attack Pakistani interests—call the reclusive Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar their leader, or *amir al-mu'minin*. Their allegiance to Mullah Omar can be gauged from the late TTP chief Baitullah Mehsud's continued insistence on being a disciple of Mullah Omar despite the Afghan Taliban distancing itself from Baitullah in 2008.<sup>11</sup> Media reports at

the time suggested that Baitullah was expelled from the Afghan Taliban due to his continued attacks on Pakistani interests.<sup>12</sup>

The reason for this is obvious. Among the Pashtun tribesmen who make up the ranks of both the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, there is widespread support for the Afghan “jihad.” The Pakistani Taliban must use that support to recruit the maximum number of young men to fill their ranks.

Indeed, even after reports suggested that the Afghan Taliban distanced itself from Baitullah, he continued to pledge allegiance to Mullah Omar as he wanted to maintain his support base in his native Waziristan as well as in the rest of Pakistan. Just like his predecessor, current TTP chief Hakimullah Mehsud also calls Mullah Omar his leader despite the fact that the Afghan Taliban never supported and approved attacks against Pakistani forces, the government or civilians.

From the Afghan Taliban's perspective, despite their disapproval of Pakistani Taliban attacks inside Pakistan, they are hesitant to disown the TTP mainly because they need Pakistani Taliban support in the tribal regions to maintain their safe havens and sanctuaries, as well as to recruit Pashtun tribesmen to fight in neighboring Afghanistan.

Therefore, long-term interests as well as strategic expediencies are keeping both the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban—including the TTP—together despite having different approaches to the conflict in South Asia. Various reports also suggest that the Afghan Taliban sometimes leverages the Haqqani network to help maintain peace between the TTP and other Afghan or Pakistani Taliban factions in the tribal areas.

As for Pakistan's military apparatus, it appears to ignore the activities of groups focused on cross-border attacks

5 Zia Ur Rehman, “Karachi's New Terrorist Groups,” *The Friday Times*, January 6, 2012.

6 The present central leader of TTP is Hakimullah Mehsud. He was recently reported dead in a drone strike in Waziristan but the report was instantly rejected by the Taliban. For details, see “Pakistani Taliban Leader Killed in U.S. Drone Attack: Report,” Associated Press, January 16, 2012.

7 Zia Ur Rehman, “Taliban Leader 'In Talks with Govt,’” *The Friday Times*, December 16-12, 2011.

8 “Pakistani Taliban Spokesman Denies Group in Peace Talks,” *New York Daily News*, December 11, 2011.

9 Personal interview, Rahimullah Yusufzai, January 2012.

10 Personal interview, Afrasiab Khattak, January 2012.

11 Following the increasing number of attacks against civilians, mosques and markets in Pakistan in 2007-2009, the Afghan Taliban asked their Pakistani counterparts not to carry out attacks in Pakistan and instead focus on

“jihad” in Afghanistan. When the attacks continued, the Afghan Taliban reportedly announced the expulsion of Baitullah Mehsud from their fold, although they later denied this. See personal interview, Rahimullah Yusufzai, January 2012; “Afghan Taliban Does Not Support Militant Activity in Pak,” Press Trust of India, January 29, 2008.

12 Ibid.



in Afghanistan. The military instead concentrates its operations against those groups that primarily target Pakistani troops and civilians. The Hakimullah Mehsud-led TTP is at the top of Pakistan's target list for this reason.

#### U.S.-Taliban Talks and the Implications for Pakistan

In light of the relationship between the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, key questions have been raised as to how violence in Pakistan will evolve if the Afghan Taliban successfully engage in peace talks with the United States. Should peace talks occur, two theories have been presented about the future of the Pakistani Taliban.

The first theory is that violence in Pakistan will subside after the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops from Afghanistan. Once the justification for violence is removed, the Pakistani Taliban will have no excuse to continue a "jihad" in Pakistan.<sup>13</sup> Instead, all of the Taliban factions will work to gain leverage in a post-war Afghanistan.

The second theory is that the Pakistani Taliban will be encouraged by the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops, and will intensify their efforts to gain a share of power in Pakistan's government along the lines of their Afghan counterparts. Proponents of this theory argue that the Pakistani Taliban have already spread their influence from the tribal regions into Pakistan's urban areas. They have become emboldened and will not disband easily. Although they may temporarily cease their insurgent activities following the withdrawal of U.S. and international forces from Afghanistan, in the long-term they will demand a share of power from Pakistan's government either by nonviolent (political) or violent (insurgency) means.<sup>14</sup>

In the meantime, Pakistan will not relinquish its long-term interests in Afghanistan and the region, and it will likely continue to view the Afghan Taliban as one of the country's strategic assets—even though its influence on the group is limited.<sup>15</sup> Indeed,

although the different militant groups and their various factions often create problems for Pakistan, such "follies" are often ignored to maintain sight of the "bigger picture": to use the Afghan Taliban to counter-balance the anti-Pakistan elements in a future Afghan government; to prevent countries such as India and Iran from gaining too much political influence in Afghanistan; to use Pakistani jihadist groups as a bargain chip in negotiations with India over Kashmir; to fend off Indian interference in Baluchistan and northern Pakistan; and finally to keep a check on Pashtun nationalism.<sup>16</sup>

*Daud Khattak is Senior Editor with RFE/RL's Mashaal Radio in Prague, Czech Republic. Besides working in Afghanistan as Editor at Pajhwok Afghan News from 2005-2008, Mr. Khattak worked with Pakistani English daily newspapers covering the situation in KP and FATA. He also worked for Sunday Times London and contributed articles to the Christian Science Monitor. In 2010, his paper on the situation in Swat, "The Battle for Pakistan: Swat Valley," was published by the New America Foundation.*

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Afghan Taliban; however, they clearly have some influence over the group. The same is true about the so-called "good" Pakistani Taliban led by commanders Hafiz Gul Bahadar and Maulvi Nazir.

<sup>16</sup> No government, not even the governments of the mujahidin and the pro-Pakistan Taliban, accepted the 1893-era Durand Line dividing Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the past few years, the disappointment among the nationalists and secular elements of the Pakistan army and its security agencies have increased, and a vast majority of people, particularly the youth, are now looking beyond the Durand Line. The secular and nationalist elements have also suffered the most at the hands of Taliban militants who are believed to be indirectly supported and propped up by the Pakistani secret services. To keep them and their nationalism in check, the presence of Taliban on the scene is being seen as the easiest tool for the state of Pakistan because the Taliban provide a cross-border outlet for extremist Pashtuns.

## Preventing Terrorism and Conflict in Libya: An Innovative Role for the United Nations?

By Naureen Chowdhury Fink

THE UNITED NATIONS confronts a daunting challenge in Libya. Not since it gained independence in 1956 has Libya ever experienced democratic governance or a unified national identity. Preparations are now underway to hold elections within six months of the cessation of violent conflict that overthrew a regime entrenched for four decades. In addition, the transitional government is faced with numerous urgent priorities that include restoring public order, disarming and demobilizing fighters and consolidating democratic governance. It is also incumbent on the National Transitional Council (NTC) to establish mechanisms to redress the grievances of Libyans which prompted the revolt against the regime of Mu`ammar Qadhafi.<sup>1</sup>

Members of the international community have also voiced concerns about the security of Libya and its impact on regional and international peace and stability. It is believed that the sizable arsenal Qadhafi accumulated since the 1970s includes up to 20,000 shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles or man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS), the type of weapon reportedly used in a 2002 attempt by al-Qa`ida to shoot down a commercial airplane over Mombasa.<sup>2</sup> It is the circulation of such weapons, and their potential acquisition by militant and terrorist groups, that underscores concerns about terrorism in Libya today.<sup>3</sup>

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1 "Libya: UN and Government Sign Status of Mission Agreement," UN News Centre, January 10, 2012. The urgency associated with these tasks contributed to the absence of a mention of terrorism or related violence in the original resolution outlining UNSMIL's mandate (UN document S/Res/2009). Personal interview, representative of UN Security Council member state, New York, December 2011.

2 "On the Trail of Libya's Missing Missiles," BBC, November 18, 2011.

3 Karen Leigh, "North Africa's Sahel: The Next Terrorism Hotspot?" *Time Magazine*, September 12, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Personal interview, Afrasiab Khattak, January 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Pakistan's intelligence agencies do not control the

Acting to address these potential terrorist threats, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2017 in October 2011. This articulates concerns “that the proliferation of all arms and related materiel of all types, in particular, man-portable surface-to-air missiles, in the region could fuel terrorist activities, including those of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).” It calls upon the Libyan authorities to take all necessary steps to prevent the proliferation of such weapons, ensure their proper custody and uphold Libya’s obligations under international arms control protocols. The resolution is innovative for its preventive approach to terrorism, calling for an integrated threat analysis and response options in anticipation of, rather than response to, a crisis. Moreover, it links conflict prevention, state-building and terrorism prevention efforts—practices that are normally insulated from each other at the United Nations by high bureaucratic silos and political sensitivities. This comprehensive approach is further reflected in resolution 2022 (adopted in December 2011), which draws on resolutions 2009 and 2017, among others, to define the role of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).

Drawing on interviews with diplomats, UN officials, experts and a review of existing literature, this article briefly examines the terrorist threat in Libya before detailing the UN’s response, articulated through the Security Council, highlighting the contribution of UN resolutions 2017 and 2022 to an integrated and strategic multilateral approach to the prevention of terrorism and conflict in Libya. The article suggests that where there is sufficient political will, the United Nations can be adaptive, proactive and responsive in addressing complex security challenges.

### Examining the Challenge

Prospects for armed violence, criminality and terrorism have increased in Libya and among its North African neighbors with the potential for groups such as AQIM to acquire small arms and light weapons, as well as stocks of highly accurate, heat seeking MANPADS—particularly third-generation models more capable of deflecting countermeasures than older iterations. There are also concerns about

the foothold that hardline Islamists could gain should the transitional government prove unable to consolidate its political authority. These have been underscored by the prominence of figures such as Abdel Hakim Belhaj, a former commander of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)—still listed as a terrorist organization affiliated with al-Qa’ida by the United Nations—who is now the head of the Tripoli Military Council.<sup>4</sup>

Although the LIFG spent approximately 20 years trying to overthrow the Qadhafi regime and establish an Islamic state, Belhaj and Noman Benotman, a senior ex-commander in the LIFG and now a senior analyst at a British counterextremism think-tank, have been at pains to point out that the group always had nationalist goals and did not subscribe to al-Qa’ida ideology of global jihad.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, following a much-publicized radicalization effort spearheaded by Saif al-Islam Qadhafi, the LIFG renounced violence and dismantled the organization. As Omar Ashour, an expert on Islamist groups in the region, noted, “the experiences of the LIFG leaders in armed conflicts in Afghanistan, Libya, and Algeria have forced them to mature politically, recalculate strategically, moderate behaviorally, modify their ideological beliefs, and change the title of the organization to the Islamic Movement for Change.”<sup>6</sup> Concerns remain, however, that younger fighters, fresh from their victory over the *ancien regime*

and experienced in zones of conflict such as Iraq, will be less restrained and pose a challenge to Libya’s new government.<sup>7</sup> Should the NTC prove unable to consolidate political authority, the fragmented leadership and loyalties of diverse militias may lead to a resumption of armed violence.<sup>8</sup>

Beyond Libya, resolution 2017 underlines “the risk of destabilization posed by the dissemination in the Sahel of small arms and light weapons” and reflects widespread concerns about its impact on international peace and

**“Concerns remain that younger fighters, fresh from their victory over the ancien regime and experienced in zones of conflict such as Iraq, will be less restrained and pose a challenge to Libya’s new government.”**

security. As a recent UN interagency mission to the Sahel reported, states in the region are already confronting vast developmental challenges that predate the Libyan conflict, compounded by an imminent food crisis in 2012.<sup>9</sup> They have expressed concern that the outpouring of returnees from Libya, including workers and fighters either from the regular Libyan armed forces or mercenaries previously employed by Qadhafi, could further strain national resources, reignite conflicts and upset carefully balanced sociopolitical dynamics, which could exacerbate the

4 The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group continues to be listed by the UN’s Al-Qaeda Sanctions List. The Security Council has reportedly received a request from the Libyan authorities to have the LIFG de-listed. Personal interview, representative of UN Security Council permanent member state, New York, January 2012.

5 Mahan Abedin, “From Mujahid to Activist: An Interview with a Libyan Veteran of the Afghan Jihad,” *Spotlight on Terror* 3:2 (2005). While Belhaj has argued for the inclusion of Islamists in a pluralist democratic government representing the new Libya, he has also acknowledged that “the February 17th revolution is the Libyan people’s revolution and no one can claim it, neither secularists nor Islamists. The Libyan people have different views, and all those views have to be involved and respected.” See Abdel Hakim Belhaj, “The Revolution Belongs to All Libyans Secular or Not,” *Guardian*, September 27, 2011; “In Libya, Former Enemy is Recast in Role of Ally,” *New York Times*, September 1, 2011.

6 Omar Ashour, “Ex-Jihadists in the New Libya,” *Foreign Policy*, August 29, 2011.

7 A report by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point suggested that Libya provided the second highest number of fighters in Iraq. See Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, *Al-Qaida’s Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2008).

8 This has already been seen, for example, in conflicts between the Zintan and Misrata militias. See Christopher Stephen, “The Lesson of Bani Walid,” *Foreign Policy*, January 28, 2012.

9 Personal interviews, senior UN counterterrorism officials, New York, January 2012. Also see “Report of the Assessment Mission on the Impact of the Libyan Crisis on the Sahel Region,” United Nations, January 17, 2012.

terrorist threat.<sup>10</sup> The deteriorating security situation may also impact the ability of international agencies to provide assistance and thereby create space for groups such as AQIM to fill the void by providing social services and increase its recruiting prospects.

Authorities in Mali, for example, have voiced fears that Tuareg fighters who served in Qadhafi's army may return home to join separatists fighting for an autonomous state in the Azouad region.<sup>11</sup> Although some Tuareg leaders of the newly formed Mouvement National de Liberation de l'Azouad (MNL) have expressed determination to fight AQIM, there remain concerns that returning fighters will reignite conflict and swell the ranks and capacities of terrorist and militant groups.<sup>12</sup> Some civil society leaders have also expressed concern that the influx of weapons has prompted greater assertiveness on the part of hardline Islamist groups seeking to impose harsh interpretations of Islamic law and, for example, shut down educational facilities or political gatherings where men and women are not segregated.<sup>13</sup>

Neighboring Niger has requested international assistance with intelligence gathering and aerial surveillance to secure its six million square kilometers of desert. Following clashes with suspected al-Qa`ida members and reports that Niger serves as a transit point for armed fighters and weapons en route to Mali, Nigerien President Mahamadou Issoufou told an audience in Geneva that, "There have

been concerns for security because weapons have been circulating in the country and we're concerned these will fall into the wrong hands."<sup>14</sup>

There is some difference of opinion among officials regarding the extent of the threat posed by MANPADS to the region and the international community beyond. Despite the concerns reflected in resolution 2017, the United Nations has not yet found evidence of MANPADS having been moved into neighboring states.<sup>15</sup> That does not mean, however, that they have not been stored by armed groups or secretly acquired by legitimate or illicit armed forces in the region. Nonetheless, the dissolution of Qadhafi's government has left the country awash with weapons that have contributed to increased levels of criminal violence.<sup>16</sup> The threat posed by older weapons is likely to be neutralized by poor storage conditions and maintenance requirements; the most likely threat is therefore from newer weapons, although they require some training and expertise to be utilized.<sup>17</sup>

Weak governmental authority over large swathes of land, porous borders and the presence of transnational organized criminal groups and drug traffickers are contributing to enabling conditions for such groups to gain a stronger foothold in the region. While some experts remain divided about the intensity of the terrorist threat in the Sahel,<sup>18</sup> the potential interaction of AQIM with criminal outfits and radical Islamist groups such as Boko Haram or al-Shabab in neighboring Nigeria and Somalia is worrying. These challenges are compounded by the absence of a regional mechanism to address these

security concerns. To that end, the United Nations, perhaps in partnership with the African Union and relevant sub-regional organizations, as well as the newly formed Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, might provide a platform for joint responses.

### The Security Council's Approach to Terrorism

To date, the Security Council has been largely reactive in addressing terrorism. Following the events of 9/11, it adopted resolution 1373 which imposed on all member states, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (which implies the threat of armed force in the event of noncompliance), obligations to counter terrorist financing and criminalize the willful provision of funds for terrorist acts; to deny safe haven or support to terrorists and to bring perpetrators and supporters of terrorist acts to justice.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the council adapted resolution 1267 to impose sanctions on al-Qa`ida as well as the Taliban and subsequently also adopted resolution 1540 to prevent terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>20</sup> Together, these constitute the three primary mechanisms through which the council has addressed global terrorism.

The expert bodies that support the council in implementing these resolutions—the Counterterrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), the 1267/1989 Monitoring Team and the 1540 Committee's Expert Group—are also members of the Counterterrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), an interagency body mandated to support implementation of the UN's Global Counterterrorism Strategy. Adopted by consensus in the 193-member General Assembly, the strategy is notable for highlighting the importance of

10 Some estimates suggest that as many as 400,000 returnees have left Libya since the conflict, including as many as 10,000-40,000 fighters. Personal interview, UN counterterrorism official, January 2012.

11 "Ex-Gaddafi Tuareg Fighters Boost Mali Rebels," BBC, October 17, 2011; "Return of Tuareg Fighters from Libya Worries Mali Authorities," France 24, November 11, 2011; "Touareg Unrest Looms in the Sahel," Magharebia, November 9, 2011.

12 See, for example, the statement by Hama Ag Sid Ahmad to Mauritania's Sahara Media on December 19, 2011. Also see "Touaregs Back Fight Against al-Qaeda," Magharebia, December 30, 2011. Reports also, however, indicate a resumption of fighting between the Malian government and Tuareg in the north in January 2012. See, for example, "Tuareg Rebels Launch Fresh Attacks in the North," AllAfrica.com, January 26, 2012.

13 Personal interview, UN counterterrorism official, New York, January 2012.

14 "Niger Asks Help Fighting Terrorism after Libya Conflict," Reuters, September 19, 2011.

15 Personal interview, senior UN counterterrorism official, New York, December 2011.

16 Personal interview, UN counterterrorism official, New York, January 2012.

17 Personal interview, senior UN counterterrorism official, New York, December 2011.

18 Personal interview, UN counterterrorism officials, New York, December 2011 and January 2012. For critics of a heavy counterterrorism approach to the region, see Jacques Roussellier, "Terrorism in North Africa and the Sahel: Al-Qaida's Franchise or Freelance," Middle East Institute, August 2011; "Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?" International Crisis Group, March 31, 2005.

19 As one UN counterterrorism official noted, however, resolution 1373 does have a preventive aspect in seeking to avoid future attacks such as those perpetrated on September 11, 2001. Personal interview, UN counterterrorism official, January 2012.

20 On June 17, 2011, the Security Council decided to split the al-Qa`ida and Taliban sanctions regime through resolutions 1989 and 1988 respectively. Resolution 1989 (2011) stipulates that the sanctions list maintained by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) will henceforth be known as the "Al-Qaida Sanctions List" and include only names of those individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida. For more details, see [www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/information.shtml](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/information.shtml).



addressing “conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism” (including prolonged and unresolved conflicts) and promoting and protecting human rights alongside more traditional “hard security” law enforcement and legislative measures to address terrorism.<sup>21</sup>

### The Prevention Perspective

The notion of terrorism prevention has gained currency among states in part due to a greater focus on conflict prevention in the multilateral community. Historically, UN member states have proved resistant to preventive interventions; however, a recognition of the immense human and material costs of conflict, the transnational nature of contemporary security threats and a softening of views on sovereignty in some regions have made such an approach more politically palatable.

Emerging norms like the “responsibility to protect” (R2P) have benefited from this trend.<sup>22</sup> In recent years, the UN’s resources for prevention have been reinforced, for example, by the creation of a Mediation Support Unit in the Department of Political Affairs that has also been allocated additional posts and resources to boost its analytical capacities, as well as the appointment of special advisers to the secretary general on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect.<sup>23</sup> Another development supporting a preventive approach is the institution of “horizon scanning” sessions which give the council an opportunity to hear about

imminent crises that may appear on its agenda.

Reflective of this trend favoring conflict prevention at the United Nations, and in particular “systemic prevention” which seeks to address threats that transcend political borders, is the increased interest in a more preventive approach to terrorism.<sup>24</sup> This has been reflected by the council’s willingness to expand the more traditionally narrow definition of “threats to international

### **“In Libya, the United Nations can build on lessons learned from the deployment of peace operations and special political missions in a variety of postconflict scenarios.”**

peace and security” and consider drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and terrorism as global security threats. Furthermore, the council has requested these be considered in multilateral conflict prevention strategies, conflict analysis, integrated missions’ assessment and planning and asked the secretary general to “consider including in his reports, as appropriate, analysis on the role played by these threats in situations on its agenda.”<sup>25</sup>

Building on this broader perspective, at a high level Security Council debate on counterterrorism, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton argued that addressing terrorism requires not only a multifaceted effort to counter the financing of terrorism, strengthened legal and judicial institutions, and improved intelligence capacities, but also a strong preventive approach that addresses sociopolitical conditions that make people vulnerable to exploitation by terrorists.<sup>26</sup>

Notwithstanding such rhetoric, there has been little institutional investment, comparable to conflict prevention efforts, in terrorism prevention at the United Nations. Few resources are devoted to the kind of threat assessment called for by the council, and as authors James Cockayne and Camino Kavanagh noted, there is little routine inclusion of transnational threats in current mandates. As a result, resourcing for these activities is “paltry.”<sup>27</sup> The cross-regional and multi-dimensional aspect of such security challenges makes it difficult for a highly compartmentalized bureaucracy to respond with agility, and consequently, as one senior UN official observed, “transnational threats are orphans in the UN system.”<sup>28</sup>

This is in part because despite the uptick of interest in prevention, there has been little progress in translating policy interest into practice. There is a lack of clarity among member states regarding what exactly “terrorism prevention” entails; whether its objectives center on preventing further attacks by known groups or the emergence of new terrorist actors. Additionally, states remain divided on whether the council should focus on structural or operational prevention and have voiced concerns that expanding UN missions’ mandates to include terrorism risks overextending their capacities, especially given the unlikelihood of additional resources in this troubled economic climate.<sup>29</sup>

Some states have suggested that among the tools available to the council to operationalize terrorism prevention is the mandate of special political missions overseen by the council, where such issues may be reflected. States, however, also remain divided on whether the council—or indeed the

21 “The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy,” United Nations, September 20, 2006.

22 Christoph Mikulaschek and Paul Romita, “Conflict Prevention: Toward More Effective Multilateral Strategies,” International Peace Institute, December 2011. The “responsibility to protect” or “R2P” is an emerging norm which stipulates that “1) the State carries the primary responsibility for the protection of populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing; 2) the international community has a responsibility to assist States in fulfilling this responsibility; and 3) the international community should use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means to protect populations from these crimes. If a State fails to protect its populations or is in fact the perpetrator of crimes, the international community must be prepared to take stronger measures, including the collective use of force through the UN Security Council.”

23 “Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering Results,” Report of the UN Secretary General, United Nations, August 26, 2011.

24 Paul Romita, *The UN Security Council and Conflict Prevention: A Primer* (New York: International Peace Institute, 2011).

25 “Statement by the President of the Security Council,” United Nations, February 24, 2010.

26 “Statement by the President of the Security Council,” United Nations, September 27, 2010.

27 James Cockayne and Camino Kavanagh, “Flying Blind? Political Mission Responses to Transnational Threats,” in *Review of Political Missions* (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2011).

28 These details are based on closed door roundtable discussions with representatives of Security Council member states, New York, October 2011.

29 Structural prevention addresses the underlying causes of conflict, while operational prevention refers to the tools available to address more proximate causes of conflict, or the instruments available to the United Nations to take tactical preventive measures. For more on the various types of prevention, see Romita, *The UN Security Council and Conflict Prevention: A Primer*.



United Nations—is the most appropriate forum for this.<sup>30</sup>

#### Libya: Translating Policy to Practice?

There is a great deal of potential for overlap between efforts to prevent conflict and efforts to prevent terrorism. In both cases, practitioners speak of the need for development, conflict resolution mechanisms, the promotion and protection of human rights and strengthened institutions of governance to address conditions conducive to the outbreak of violence. In a globalized world, the confluence of local grievances, weak or fragile states and transnational threats create a combustible mix that might generate armed conflict, terrorism or both. Yet the two areas of practice are often insulated from each other by high bureaucratic silos and political sensitivities, and the two sets of practitioners have few opportunities to develop joint responses or strategies.

Given this background, resolution 2017, an initiative of the Russian Federation and adopted unanimously by the council, is particularly innovative for taking a preventive approach to terrorism and linking the need to prevent terrorism with conflict prevention and statebuilding efforts in Libya.<sup>31</sup> Resolution 2017 calls for a multidisciplinary assessment of the threats and challenges, in particular, “related to terrorism, posed by the proliferation of all arms and, related materiel of all types in particular, man-portable surface-to-air missiles, from Libya, in the region, and to submit a report to the council on proposals to counter this threat.” It nominates a “think-tank”<sup>32</sup> of relevant UN and multilateral entities, including the Panel of Experts of the Libya Sanctions

Committee, the Security Council’s Counterterrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), to pool their expertise to “assess the threats and challenges, in particular, related to terrorism, posed by the proliferation of all arms, and in particular, man-portable surface-to-air missiles, from Libya, in the region,” and asks the Libya Sanctions Committee<sup>33</sup> to submit a report to the council with proposals to counter this threat.<sup>34</sup> Resolution 2022, adopted in December, firmly integrates these efforts into UNSMIL’s mandate.

While macro questions regarding prevention are being debated, resolution 2017 provides a pragmatic model for action and positions the UN to take a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to terrorism. Moreover, the resolution makes creative use of existing UN resources by bringing together entities that do not usually work together to develop a joint analysis and response strategy. It also draws CTED out of the narrower role of monitoring implementation of resolution 1373, and into a political advisory capacity for the council. As one diplomat described it, drafters considered the expertise required to study the threat and rather than develop a new mechanism to do so, or rely on standard bureaucratic templates, suggested this grouping of the most relevant entities.<sup>35</sup>

In Libya, the United Nations can build on lessons learned from the deployment of peace operations and special political missions in a variety of postconflict scenarios. For example, the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) was also called upon to support nascent democratic processes, help a transitional government consolidate political authority and assist efforts to disarm, demobilize and

reintegrate fighters, many from the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), still listed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order 13224.<sup>36</sup> Ian Martin, who also led UNMIN from 2006-2009, will be able to draw on these experiences in his post as the head of UNSMIL.

By attempting to tailor the UN’s response more closely to the threat on the ground and bringing together UN and other entities on the basis of relevance rather than traditional bureaucratic practice, resolutions 2017 and 2022 demonstrate that where political will exists, states can develop a multilateral response that is rapid, adaptable and creative. It provides an example that may be applied to future crises which call for a preventive approach to armed violence and terrorism. Although Libya is in many ways a unique case and such an international intervention is unlikely to be repeated in the near future, conflicts in the 21st century are likely to defy neat compartmentalization and require integrated approaches, and the international community needs to be ready to adapt and respond with all the tools it has at its disposal.

*Naureen Chowdhury Fink is a Senior Analyst at the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation. The views expressed in this paper represent those of the author and not necessarily CGCC. The author would like to thank those diplomats, experts, UN officials and colleagues who provided invaluable inputs and feedback for this article. All errors and omissions are the responsibility of the author alone.*

30 These details are based on closed door roundtable discussions with representatives of Security Council member states, New York, October 2011.

31 Paragraph 2 of UNSC resolution 2022 reads “...decides that the mandate of UNSMIL shall in addition include, in coordination and consultation with the transitional Government of Libya, assisting and supporting Libyan national efforts to address the threats of proliferation of all arms and related materiel of all types, in particular man-portable surface-to-air missiles, taking into account, among other things, the report referred to in paragraph 5 of resolution 2017 (2011).”

32 Personal interview, representative of UN Security Council permanent member state, New York, January 2012.

33 Formally known as the “committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya,” and informally as the “Libya Sanctions Committee.” It was established on February 26, 2011, to oversee relevant sanctions measures and oversee tasks set out by the Security Council. Its mandate was expanded by resolution 1973. In monitoring the implementation of relevant sanctions, the Committee is assisted by a Panel of Experts.

34 “Resolution 2017 (2011),” United Nations, October 31, 2011.

35 Personal interview, representative of UN Security Council permanent member state, New York, January 2012.

36 The mandate of the UN Mission in Nepal was set out in Security Council resolution 1704, adopted in 2007 (UN Document S/Res/1704). For clarification on the status of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), see “The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) Exclusion from Foreign Terrorist Organization List,” U.S. Department of State, August 30, 2011.

## Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

January 1, 2012 (KENYA): Suspected al-Shabab-affiliated gunmen shot at New Years revelers at two bars in northeastern Kenya, killing five people. – *Australian Broadcasting Corporation, January 2*

January 1, 2012 (PAKISTAN): A bomb ripped through a shop in Salarzai town of Bajaur Agency in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The blast killed an anti-Taliban militiaman. – *Dawn, January 1*

January 1, 2012 (PAKISTAN): A roadside bomb killed three Pakistani soldiers in Baluchistan Province. – *AFP, January 1*

January 2, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): As reported in *USA Today*, "U.S. military deaths in the Afghanistan War declined in 2011, the first drop in four years, amid a string of battlefield successes against Taliban insurgents by U.S. and other coalition forces... The number of U.S. military deaths in Afghanistan totaled 405 last year, down 18% from 2010... Overall allied deaths, including U.S. forces, totaled 545 in 2011, down from 699 in 2010." – *USA Today, January 3*

January 2, 2012 (PAKISTAN): According to an article in Pakistan's *The News International*, "the year 2011 saw a steep decline in the number of suicide attacks committed across [Pakistan]... The break-up of the casualties [from suicide attacks] since 2002 include: 27 killings in 2002; 69 in 2003; 89 in 2004; 84 in 2005; 161 in 2006; 765 in 2007; 893 in 2008; 949 in 2009; 1167 in 2010 and 612 in 2011." – *The News International, January 2*

January 3, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghan Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid announced that the group is prepared to open a political office in Qatar for the purpose of negotiating "with the international community" on Afghanistan. According to the *Guardian*, "The office is intended to provide a venue for Taliban officials to carry out talks with US and other negotiators without fear of assassination or arrest

by NATO or the Afghan government." – *Guardian, January 3*

January 3, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber on a motorcycle attacked a convoy of Afghan police in Kandahar Province, killing at least four children. – *UPI, January 3; Voice of America, January 3*

January 3, 2012 (PHILIPPINES): A Philippine military commander told reporters that at least five foreign militants—with potential links to transnational jihadists such as members of al-Qa`ida—are hiding in the remote jungles of Jolo Island in Sulu Province, located in the southern Philippines. The militants are allegedly led by U.S.-trained Malaysian engineer Zulkifli bin Hir, also known as Marwan. As explained by the Associated Press, "U.S. troops have been providing training, intelligence and other noncombat help to underfunded Filipino troops for years to help crush local Abu Sayyaf militants and the foreign extremists they shelter, including members of the Indonesia-based militant network Jemaah Islamiyah." – *AP, January 3*

January 5, 2012 (GLOBAL): The U.S. State Department designated the al-Qa`ida Kurdish Battalions (AQKB) as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity. According to the State Department, "Established in 2007 from the remnants of other Kurdish terrorist organizations, AQKB has sworn allegiance publicly to other terrorist groups, including al-Qaida and al-Qaida in Iraq. Operating along the border between Iran and Iraq, AQKB believes the leaders of the Kurdistan Regional Government are traitors and has claimed responsibility for a number of attacks against Kurdish targets in Iraq." – *U.S. Department of State, January 5*

January 5, 2012 (UNITED STATES): The U.S. State Department announced the creation of the Bureau of Counterterrorism that will "lead in supporting U.S. counterterrorism diplomacy and seek to strengthen homeland security, countering violent extremism, and build the capacity of partner nations to deal effectively with terrorism." – *UPI, January 5*

January 5, 2012 (IRAQ): Militants launched coordinated attacks against Shi'a in Iraq, killing approximately 72 people. At least 27 people were killed in two attacks in Baghdad, while 45 people were killed in Karbala. – *AP, January 5*

January 5, 2012 (PAKISTAN): The Pakistani Taliban announced the execution of 15 kidnapped Pakistani soldiers in revenge for military operations against them. The soldiers were originally kidnapped in Tank District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province on December 23. The bodies, found with gunshot wounds and signs of torture, were discovered in Hangu District. – *Reuters, January 5*

January 6, 2012 (SYRIA): A suicide bomber killed 26 people in Maidan district of Damascus. The Syrian government later blamed the blast on al-Qa`ida. – *Reuters, January 6*

January 6, 2012 (SOMALIA): The Kenyan military said it killed at least 60 al-Shabab fighters in the town of Garbaharey in Somalia's Gedo area. – *Voice of America, January 7*

January 7, 2012 (UNITED STATES): U.S. authorities charged Sami Osmakac of plotting a suicide attack in Tampa Bay, Florida. Osmakac, 25-years-old and a naturalized U.S. citizen from Kosovo, was charged after arming what he thought was a 100-pound car bomb. According to U.S. authorities, Osmakac wanted to punish the United States for alleged mistreatment of Muslims. – *Orlando Sentinel, January 9*

January 7, 2012 (PHILIPPINES): Abu Sayyaf Group militants blew up a bridge used by government troops and villagers in Patikul town of Sulu Province, located in the southern Philippines. According to press reports, "The militants have bombed a number of bridges on Jolo to derail military offensives and government responses to terrorist attacks. One of these was the Kandayok bridge in Panamao town, which was bombed on January 4." – *AP, January 8; Philippine Inquirer, January 8*

January 8, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): An Afghan soldier shot at U.S. military personnel while they were playing volleyball in Qalat, the capital of southern Afghanistan's Zabul Province. One U.S. soldier was killed, and the militant was fatally shot. – *Voice of America, January 9*

January 9, 2012 (UNITED STATES): U.S. authorities charged Craig Benedict Baxam, a 24-year-old former U.S. Army soldier, with attempting to travel to Somalia to join the militant group al-Shabab. He was apprehended on January 6 at Baltimore-Washington International Airport as he returned from a failed attempt to reach Somalia. – *CNN, January 10*

January 10, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): Three Taliban fighters stormed a government building in Sharan, Paktika Province. Two policemen and all of the assailants were killed. – *BBC, January 10*

January 11, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A teenage suicide bomber tried to assassinate the Kandahar police chief, but detonated his explosives early. The bomber managed to enter the police station after saying he was a resident who wanted to file a complaint. The bomber was killed, while a policeman was injured. – *Reuters, January 11*

January 11, 2012 (KENYA): The Somali militant group al-Shabab launched a cross-border raid into Kenya, killing four police officers. They also kidnapped three people thought to be local government officials. – *AFP, January 13*

January 12, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber in a vehicle killed the governor of Panjwai district in Kandahar Province. Two of the governor's sons, as well as his two guards, were also killed. According to the BBC, the governor "had recently persuaded several groups of Taliban militants to stop fighting and be reconciled with government forces." – *BBC, January 12*

January 13, 2012 (UNITED STATES): A U.S. federal judge sentenced Kareem Ibrahim to life in prison for joining a failed plot to bomb John F. Kennedy Airport in 2007. – *AP, January 14*

January 13, 2012 (SOMALIA): The Somali militant group al-Shabab paraded two Kenyan hostages around the Gedo region, saying, "These people were captured from the enemy during a raid carried out inside Kenya by mujahidin fighters." – *AFP, January 13*

January 14, 2012 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber dressed as a policeman targeted Shi'a pilgrims to the west of Basra, killing at least 53 people. – *Reuters, January 14*

January 14, 2012 (PAKISTAN): Militants attacked a police office in Dera Ismail Khan city in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, killing at least nine people. – *Dawn, January 14*

January 15, 2012 (IRAQ): Gunmen wearing explosives belts entered a police building in Ramadi, Anbar Province, killing four people. According to Reuters, "One of the attackers detonated his explosive belt at the entrance to the police building and others tried unsuccessfully to take hostages but were turned away by intense gunfire from security forces inside...Three of the gunmen were killed by police gunfire and three blew themselves up, the last after he was cornered by security forces on a rooftop." – *Reuters, January 12*

January 15, 2012 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani intelligence officials said that intercepted radio communications suggest that the leader of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, Hakimullah Mehsud, may have been killed in a U.S. drone strike on January 12. The Taliban, however, denied the report. – *AP, January 16*

January 16, 2012 (YEMEN): A group of al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) militants took control of Rada, a town 100 miles south of Sana`a. The militants overran Yemeni army positions and freed at least 150 inmates from the town's prison. – *AP, January 16*

January 17, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters assassinated a member of the Dand district council in Kandahar Province. The official was killed while praying at a mosque. – *AP, January 18*

January 17, 2012 (PAKISTAN): The Pakistani Taliban assassinated Mukarram Khan Aatif, a reporter for Voice of America, as he was praying in northwest Pakistan. A Pakistani Taliban official later said, "All reporters of Voice of America are our targets and should resign; otherwise we will kill them." Voice of America is a radio service financed by the U.S. government. According to the *New York Times*, "Mr. Aatif worked for Deewa Radio, a Voice of America service that was set up in 2006 to broadcast in the Pashto language to the people of Pakistan's seven tribal areas along the Afghan border...Voice of America's local contributors, called stringers, are mostly villagers who may hold second jobs in schools or shops or do similar work for the Pakistani news media; they are often attracted to the American-financed services because the pay is relatively high. But they can be susceptible to violent intimidation from either the radical Islamist groups or the Pakistani government soldiers operating in the area." – *New York Times, January 18*

January 18, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber on a motorcycle killed 12 people in Kajaki district of Helmand Province. – *AP, January 18*

January 19, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber in a vehicle detonated explosives near the gate of the Kandahar Airfield, killing seven civilians. – *Voice of America, January 19*

January 19, 2012 (PAKISTAN): A Pakistani security official told reporters that the country will soon reopen supply routes to NATO forces in Afghanistan. Those routes have been closed since a NATO cross-border attack killed 24 Pakistani soldiers in November 2011. The official, however, said that Pakistan will now impose tariffs on the roads. – *Reuters, January 19*

January 19, 2012 (SOMALIA): A suicide bomber killed six people at a refugee camp in Mogadishu. – *BBC, January 19*

January 20, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): An Afghan soldier reportedly shot to death four French soldiers in Kapisa Province. – *Reuters, January 21*



January 20, 2012 (NIGERIA): A series of coordinated bomb and gun attacks targeted security forces in Kano, killing approximately 150 people. According to Agence France-Presse, "The city of Kano, the largest in Nigeria's mainly Muslim north, erupted in chaos, with some 20 explosions heard and gunfire ringing out as eight police and immigration offices or residences were targeted. It was not immediately clear who was behind the violence, though previous such attacks in Nigeria's north have been blamed on Islamist group Boko Haram. Police confirmed eight areas had been targeted, including state police headquarters and a regional police base. A secret police office was also hit along with a passport office and immigration building." One of the blasts was from a suicide bomber. - *AFP, January 20; Los Angeles Times, January 21*

January 21, 2012 (IRAQ): The Iraqi Interior Ministry said that Iraqi forces killed a senior leader affiliated with al-Qa`ida in Iraq outside Mosul, Ninawa Province. During the operation, authorities arrested 19 other people, including foreign fighters. According to al-Jazeera, "The interior ministry said on Saturday that Majeed Hassan Ali, also known as Abu Ayman, the 'governor' of Mosul for the Islamic Emirate of Iraq, was killed after police acted on intelligence to launch an operation on a hideout in the village of Ruffaila." - *al-Jazeera, January 21*

January 21, 2012 (SOMALIA): Gunmen kidnapped an American man in the northern Somali town of Galkayo shortly after he left the airport. According to the Associated Press, "Galkayo is on the border between the semiautonomous northern region of Puntland and a region known as Galmudug. It is ruled by forces friendly to the U.N.-backed Somali government...A minister from the Galmudug administration said the kidnapped man is an American engineer who came to Somalia to carry out an evaluation for building a deep water port in the town of Hobyo." - *AP, January 21*

January 21, 2012 (SOMALIA): A drone aircraft reportedly killed a British member of al-Shabab in Mogadishu. The man, identified as Bilal al-Barjawi, was reportedly stripped of his British citizenship approximately 12 months earlier. According to the *New York Times*, "They [al-Shabab] said he was of Lebanese descent and had grown up in West London." Al-Barjawi may have been a close associate of slain al-Qa`ida operative Fadil Harun (also known as Fazul Abdullah Mohammad), who was killed last year in Somalia. - *AFP, January 21*

January 23, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): According to Reuters, a negotiator for the outlawed Hizb-i-Islami group in Afghanistan said that U.S. and Afghan officials have shown flexibility during secret talks to help end the country's war. "Hizb-i-Islami, which means Islamic Party, is a radical militant group which shares some of the Taliban's anti-foreigner, anti-government aims, and has widespread national support," Reuters explained. - *Reuters, January 23*

January 24, 2012 (NIGERIA): Niger's foreign minister said that members of the Nigerian sect Boko Haram received explosives training from al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb at camps in the Sahel region. - *Reuters, January 25*

January 24, 2012 (ALGERIA): An Algerian newspaper reported that three members of an al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb cell were recently arrested after plotting to ram U.S. or European ships in the Mediterranean with an explosive-laden boat. - *ABC News, January 24*

January 24, 2012 (YEMEN): Fighters from al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula agreed to withdraw from the Yemeni town of Rada, which they overran on January 16. Reports suggested that "tribal mediators succeeded in convincing the militants to accept the release of 15 of their members held by Yemen authorities without trial in return for evacuating Rada." - *AFP, January 24*

January 24, 2012 (SOMALIA): An al-Shabab suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden truck into an Ethiopian army base in Beledweyne. The number of casualties was not known. - *Voice of America, January 24*

January 25, 2012 (UNITED STATES): U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta told reporters that despite the deaths of Usama bin Ladin and Anwar al-Awlaqi, the al-Qa`ida network remains a "real threat to the United States." Panetta also said, "we're confronting Al-Qaeda in Pakistan. We're confronting the nodes of Al-Qaeda in Yemen, in Somalia, in North Africa...and obviously whatever Al-Qaeda links are involved in Afghanistan." - *AFP, January 25*

January 25, 2012 (IRAQ): The Islamic State of Iraq released a statement saying that the United States withdrew its troops from Iraq "because its economic and human losses were unbearable. America's bankruptcy and collapse is imminent. This is the real reason behind the withdrawal." - *AP, January 25*

January 25, 2012 (SOMALIA): U.S. Navy Seals rescued two foreign aid workers who have been held captive in Somalia for three months. The soldiers were dropped into Somalia and freed American Jessica Buchanan and Dane Poul Thisted. The Seal team killed nine of the captors. - *BBC, January 25*

January 26, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber in a vehicle targeted a Western convoy in Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province. Four Afghan civilians were killed. - *Los Angeles Times, January 26*

January 27, 2012 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber in a vehicle attacked a funeral procession in a predominately Shi'a neighborhood of Baghdad, killing at least 28 people. - *Wall Street Journal, January 28; AP, January 27*

January 27, 2012 (PAKISTAN): Unidentified militants fired rockets at an elite Pakistani military academy in Abbottabad, near the compound that housed Usama bin Ladin. There were no casualties and there was no immediate claim of responsibility. - *New York Times, January 27*

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**CONTACT**

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

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

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January 29, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): As stated in Voice of America, "Afghan Taliban negotiators are meeting with U.S. officials in Qatar for a series of discussions aimed at building trust between the two sides ahead of the upcoming peace talks." – *Voice of America*, January 30

January 30, 2012 (NORWAY): Norway convicted two men over an al-Qa`ida plot to attack a Danish newspaper that caricatured the Prophet Muhammad. According to the *Telegraph*, "The Oslo district court sentenced alleged ringleader Mikael Davud, to seven years in prison and co-defendant Shawan Sadek Saeed Bujak to three and a half years." – *Telegraph*, January 30

January 31, 2012 (YEMEN): The U.S. military launched an airstrike against al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) militants in Yemen, killing an estimated four AQAP commanders. – *Washington Post*, January 31; *UPI*, February 1