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About the CTC Sentinel

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

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A Profile of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan

By Hassan Abbas



THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH, military strategy and leadership quality of the Taliban in Pakistan's tribal territories has qualitatively improved during the last few years. At the time of the U.S.-led military campaign in Afghanistan in late 2001, allies and sympathizers of the Taliban in Pakistan were not identified as "Taliban" themselves. That reality is now a distant memory. Today, Pakistan's indigenous Taliban are an effective fighting force and are engaging the Pakistani military on one side and NATO forces on the other.

The transition from being Taliban supporters and sympathizers to becoming a mainstream Taliban force in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) initiated when many small militant groups operating independently in the area started networking with one another. This sequence of developments occurred while Pakistani forces were spending the majority of their resources finding "foreigners" in the area linked to al-Qa`ida (roughly in the 2002-04 period). Soon, many other local extremist

groups, which were banned in Pakistan, started joining the Taliban ranks in FATA—some as followers while others as partners. During this process, the Pakistani Taliban never really merged into the organizational structure of the Afghan Taliban under Mullah Omar; instead, they developed a distinct identity. From their perspective, they intelligently created a space for themselves in Pakistan by engaging in military attacks while at other times cutting deals with the Pakistani government to establish their autonomy in the area.¹ By default, they were accepted as a legitimate voice in at least two FATA agencies—South Waziristan and North Waziristan.

During this process, the Pakistani Taliban effectively established themselves as an alternative leadership to the traditional tribal elders. By the time the Pakistani government realized the changing dynamics and tried to resurrect the tribal jirga institution, it was too late. The Taliban

¹ They began cutting deals with the government in 2004.

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had killed approximately 200 of the tribal elders under charges of being Pakistani and American spies.

These developments explain the genesis of a new formation: Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The TTP refers to the Taliban “movement” in Pakistan that coalesced in December 2007 under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud—a wanted militant leader from South Waziristan. This analysis discusses the origin, nature, capabilities and potential of this organization.

Formation of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan

The name “Tehrik-i-Taliban” had been used prior to the latest December 14 announcement. An organization with a similar name emerged in FATA’s Orakzai Agency in 1998.² Some reports also mention a similar organization by the name of Tehrik-i-Tulaba (Movement of Students) also operating in Orakzai Agency that even established an active Shari’a court.³ The name and idea, therefore, is not original.

More recently, on October 23, a credible newspaper in Pakistan disclosed that five militant groups joined hands to set up an organization named Tehrik-i-Taliban in Mohmand Agency with a goal “to flush out gangs carrying out criminal activities in the name of Taliban.” Its spokesman, who was identified under the Arab name Abu Nauman Askari, even mentioned the formation of a 16-member *shura* (consultative committee) to coordinate the activities of the groups.⁴ The statement, however, sounded like an initiative that benefited from government involvement since Islamabad has been attempting to create rifts between the different Taliban and militant factions. The rise of Maulvi Nazir in 2007, for instance, was such an operation as he had received government support in challenging Uzbek militants operating in South Waziristan.⁵ Furthermore, the news was not carried by any other major newspaper in the country, indicating that no general press release was issued by the supposed new formation. In this context, it is possible that it was a planted story by Pakistan’s intelligence

services to gather support for the group. Such leaks are not uncommon. Nothing has been heard about this organization since.

Less than two months after this announcement, another group claiming to be Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan announced its formation. The December 14, 2007 announcement was viewed suspiciously in terms of authenticity, since it followed after the October 23 announcement. It soon became clear, however, that the December 14 announcement was unique and alarming. It showed that the authentic Taliban were quick to establish their ownership over the title “Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan.”

Structure, Activities and Goals of the TTP

A *shura* of 40 senior Taliban leaders established the TTP as an umbrella organization. Militant commander Baitullah Mehsud was appointed as its *amir*, Maulana Hafiz Gul Bahadur of North Waziristan as senior *naib amir* (deputy) and Maulana Faqir Muhammad of Bajaur Agency as the third in command.⁶ The *shura* not only has representation from all of FATA’s seven tribal agencies, but also from the settled North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) districts of Swat, Bannu, Tank, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, Kohistan, Buner and Malakand. This reach demonstrates the TTP’s ambitions. Since its establishment, the TTP through its various *demarches* have announced the following objectives and principles:

1. Enforce Shari’a, unite against NATO forces in Afghanistan and perform “defensive jihad against the Pakistan army.”⁷
2. React strongly if military operations are not stopped in Swat District and North Waziristan Agency.
3. Demand the abolishment of all military checkpoints in the FATA area.
4. Demand the release of Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) Imam Abdul Aziz.
5. Refuse future peace deals with the government of Pakistan.

Initially, the TTP gave a 10 day deadline for the government to stop military action in FATA and Swat District, but then extended the deadline in lieu of the country’s mourning of former Prime Minister Benazir

Bhutto’s death on December 27, 2007.⁸ On January 4, 2008, however, TTP spokesman Ghazi Ahmed called journalists to inform them that a one week extension of the ultimatum would begin on January 5 and threatened to attack the city of Peshawar if their demands were not met.⁹ The TTP was also quick to deny their involvement in killing Bhutto after the government of Pakistan claimed that her assassination was conducted by associates of Baitullah Mehsud and even produced a transcript of Mehsud’s telephone conversation proving his involvement.¹⁰

Mehsud’s spokesman responded by maintaining that the transcript was “a drama,” and that Bhutto’s death was a “tragedy” that had left Mehsud “shocked.”¹¹ A purported spokesman for Mehsud, Maulvi Omar, later told Reuters: “Tribal people have their own customs. We don’t strike women.”¹² This shows that the organization has a media cell, a public relations policy and is quite serious about its plans. The Pakistani government has been slow to respond to these developments as the TTP has not yet been officially banned, and the government maintains that “a decision to this effect will come only after a thorough examination of all the aspects concerned.”¹³

Although the TTP is young as an organization, there is no dearth of operational capabilities at its disposal. Baitullah Mehsud already is an established leader—with the command of some 5,000 fighters—and has been involved in militant activities for the last few years in FATA and the adjacent areas. Many other militant groups seem anxious to join in. On December 23, 2007, for instance, five soldiers and six civilians were killed in the Mingora area of the Swat Valley when a suicide bomber targeted an army convoy. Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) quickly claimed responsibility for the attack on behalf of the

2 Hassan Abbas, “The Black-Turbaned Brigade: The Rise of TNSM in Pakistan,” *Terrorism Monitor* 4:23 (2006).

3 *The Herald* [Karachi], February 1999.

4 “Militants Form New Group,” *Dawn*, October 23, 2007.

5 For details, see Hassan Abbas, “South Waziristan’s Maulvi Nazir: The New Face of the Taliban,” *Terrorism Monitor* 5:9 (2007).

6 Mushtaq Yusufzai, “Militants Seek End to Military Operations,” *The News*, December 16, 2007.

7 “Second Editorial: Tribal Areas Under Centralized Control,” *Daily Times*, December 16, 2007.

8 Alamgir Bhattani, “Taliban Give Two Days for Swat Pullout,” *Dawn*, January 3, 2008.

9 “Tehrik-i-Taliban Threatens Attacks in Settled Areas,” *The News*, January 5, 2008; “Taliban Set 7-day Deadline,” *The Nation* [Lahore], January 5, 2008.

10 “Transcript of Alleged al-Qaida Intercept,” ABC News, December 28, 2007.

11 “Mehsud Denies Killing Bhutto: Al-Qaida,” NDTV, December 29, 2007.

12 Laura King, “Taliban Blamed for Attack on Bhutto,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 29, 2007.

13 Azaz Syed, “Taliban Outfit Faces Ban,” *Daily Times*, December 21, 2007.

TTP.¹⁴ TNSM, another banned terrorist outfit, is led by Maulana Fazlullah and had re-emerged in 2006. The group made headlines for taking control of large areas in the Swat Valley of the NWFP. The army, after a large operation in late 2007, recaptured the district, but TNSM militants (numbering in the hundreds) are still operating in parts of the district. The TTP's demand for halting government military action in Swat appealed to TNSM members and will predictably lead to more collaboration between the two groups in terms of manpower, logistics and intelligence. TNSM leader Fazlullah is known for the mobile FM radio stations that he managed until recently, on which he would broadcast his radical ideology. A TTP radio broadcast in the future would be one potential sign of more cooperation between the two terrorist groups.

The TTP's denial about its involvement in Bhutto's murder has little face value, but it is too early to reach any conclusion since the Pervez Musharraf government may be trying to shift the blame and divert attention from its own failure to provide adequate security for Bhutto. The TTP's involvement in the killings of nine tribesmen associated with pro-government leader Maulvi Nazir on January 7 in South Waziristan, however, is near certain.¹⁵ The Pakistani government has also circulated a list to law enforcement agencies of about a dozen important Shi'a political leaders who, according to its intelligence services, are on Baitullah Mehsud's hit list.¹⁶

Brief Profiles of TTP's Senior Leaders

Baitullah Mehsud—The 34-year-old warrior belongs to South Waziristan Agency and hails from the Mehsud tribe. He did not attend schooling or religious madrasa. He shuns media and has refused to be photographed, indicating that he stands by the fanatic Talibanized version of Islam. His worldview is evident from his statement that "only jihad can bring peace to the world."¹⁷ He came to prominence in February 2005 when he signed a deal with the Pakistani government that it termed as his surrender, although he interpreted it as a peace deal

in the interests of the tribal regions as well as Pakistan.¹⁸ As part of the deal, he had pledged not to provide any assistance to al-Qa`ida and other militants and not to launch operations against government forces. The deal was short lived, and since 2006 he has virtually established an independent zone in parts of South Waziristan Agency, which is widely believed to be a sanctuary for al-Qa`ida and the Taliban. In private discussions, Pakistani officials also blame the United States for direct military operations in FATA, leading to the collapse of some deals. Mehsud commands a force of around 5,000 militants and has moved aggressively against Pakistan's army in recent months, especially when he captured around 250 army soldiers in August 2007.¹⁹ The soldiers were returned only when the government released 25 militants associated with Mehsud.²⁰

Maulana Hafiz Gul Bahadur—Belonging to North Waziristan Agency, he has been a member of the local Taliban *shura* since 2005. He was also a member of the three-man signatory team, representing North Waziristan tribes, that signed the well-

"The TTP, however, is bound to refocus on Afghanistan if and when its position strengthens in FATA and the NWFP."

known peace deal between the Pakistani government and North Waziristan in September 2006.²¹ The deal collapsed in July 2007. Currently, some negotiations are being held again between the government and the agency, and Bahadur is involved in these discussions. Bahadur in fact recently chaired the meeting of militants that extended an ongoing cease-fire until January 20, 2008.²² It is noteworthy that on one hand he is part of the TTP leadership—which is openly challenging

the government—while on the other hand is negotiating with the government on behalf of his home agency. It is possible that the government is trying to create a wedge between the top leaders of the TTP—a smart move if this is indeed the motivation.

Maulana Faqir Muhammad—The relatively well-profiled 39-year-old Faqir Muhammad belongs to Mohmand tribe and is known as a facilitator for al-Qa`ida.²³ He is a resident of Bajaur Agency, but was educated in the Salafist tradition in various madrasas of the NWFP. This brought him closer to the Arabs operating in the area, which also benefited him financially. This perhaps allows him to afford the personal security team that he is known to have. He came into prominence in 2005 when government forces raided his house in search of some "high-value" al-Qa`ida operatives. He was a target of a U.S. missile attack in 2006, but he escaped unhurt. He also remained close to TNSM's founder Maulana Sufi Muhammad, who is currently in jail.

Conclusion

Of the 56 suicide bombings in Pakistan in 2007, 36 were against military related targets, including two against the ISI; two against the army headquarters in Rawalpindi; one aimed at the air force in Sargodha; and one directed at the facility of the Special Services Group (SSG) in Tarbela. For many of these attacks, the government blamed Baitullah Mehsud and his associates. This reveals the TTP's potential now that it has additional resources and geographic reach. This new organization in fact is expected to increase the capacity of militant forces in the area and exacerbate the political instability that has gripped Pakistan in recent months. This internal engagement also perhaps largely accounts for the 40 percent decline in insurgent attacks on NATO forces in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas.²⁴ The TTP, however, is bound to refocus on Afghanistan if and when its position strengthens in FATA and the NWFP.

There are signs that the government is now targeting the TTP leadership, but it lacks the human intelligence required on the ground. Musharraf's waning support within the armed forces also complicates the country's "war on terrorism" strategy. There are many

14 Claude Salhani, "A Grim Year 2007 for Pakistan," *Middle East Times*, December 28, 2007.

15 "Nine Aides of Maulvi Nazir Killed," *Daily Times*, January 8, 2008.

16 Personal interview, Pakistani government official, January 5, 2008.

17 Syed Shoib Hasan, "Profile: Baitullah Mehsud," BBC, December 28, 2007.

18 Shamim Shahid, "Baitullah, Supporters, Lay Down Arms," *The Nation*, February 8, 2005.

19 Amir Mir, "The Most Wanted Pakistani Talib," *Pakistan Post*, December 10, 2007.

20 Sami Yousafzai and Ron Moreau, "Al Qaeda's Newest Triggerman," *Newsweek*, January 14, 2007.

21 Rahimullah Yusufzai, "Peace Accord with Militants," *The News*, September 14, 2006.

22 "Five Killed in S Waziristan Clashes," *The News*, January 9, 2008.

23 Sohail Abdul Nasir, "Al-Zawahiri's Pakistani Ally: Profile of Maulana Faqir Mohammed," *Terrorism Monitor* 4:3 (2006).

24 Jason Straziuso, "US: Afghan Border Attacks Drop 40 pct.," *Guardian*, December 16, 2007.

indications that some former intelligence agents and serving junior level officials of the army apparently are in league with the militants. Borrowing the words of leading Pakistani scholar Pervez Hoodbhoy, “a part of the establishment is clearly at war with another part.” In this troubling scenario, dismantling the TTP and bringing its leadership to justice is critical for Pakistan’s internal security as well as for tackling the Taliban insurgency in southern Afghanistan.

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The Changing Face of Salafi-Jihadi Movements in the United Kingdom

By James Brandon

A SERIES OF ATTEMPTED Islamic terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom since the July 7, 2005 London bombings seem, at first glance, to suggest that Britain’s Salafi-jihadi networks—once among the most sophisticated in Europe—have survived government crackdowns largely unscathed. In particular, one group’s attempt to detonate two car bombs in central London and then attack Glasgow airport in June 2007 appears to indicate that the threat of further jihadist attacks remain high.¹ Other plots allegedly prevented by police include separate attempts to kidnap and kill off-duty Muslim soldiers in the British army² and to explode bombs on a number of trans-Atlantic flights.³ Behind this apparent swell of jihadist activity, however, government initiatives have significantly disrupted militant networks, and jihadist ideologies are coming under increasingly effective theological attack from Muslims in Britain and abroad.

Government Crackdown

Before the 2005 London bombings, high-profile radicals from the Middle East—often Saudi-educated and/or veterans of jihadist violence—controlled mosques and held rallies in central London, while their supporters openly ran publishing houses and websites and forged close links with foreign militant groups to whom they could channel funds and volunteers. Since 2005, the United Kingdom has jailed the most prominent of these preachers, such as Abu Hamza al-Masri, an Egyptian veteran of Afghanistan’s anti-Soviet jihad, and Abu Qatada, a Jordanian sometimes known as Usama bin Ladin’s spiritual leader in Europe. Other radical preachers such as Omar Bakri Muhammad and Shaykh Abdullah Feisal have left the United Kingdom. Others again, such as Saad al-Faqih and Mohammad al-Masari, both linked to al-Qa`ida through their opposition to the Saudi government in the early 1990s, now restrict their activities to Arabic language media and websites to avoid deportation to their home countries. Other leading Islamists—most notably Rashid al-Ghanoushi and Ali al-Bayanouni, the respective leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood in Tunisia and Syria—have similarly been allowed to remain in the United Kingdom as long as they do not incite or plan violence.

In a further attempt to remove extremists’ platforms, radical mosques—such as Abu Hamza’s mosque in Finsbury Park in north London—have been put in the hands of more moderate preachers and pro-jihadist websites shut down. In addition, groups funneling volunteers and money to jihadist groups in South Asia and the Middle East have been broken up, while the security services have proven themselves increasingly able to penetrate cells preparing terrorist attacks.

Evolution of Jihadist Networks

While the government’s actions have made radical Islam less visible in the United Kingdom—especially compared to the “Londonistan” era of the late 1990s—there are signs that this calm may be deceptive. Jihadist groups worldwide are notable for their willingness to adapt to changing circumstances, and those in the United Kingdom are no exception.

Increasingly, evidence suggests that a younger generation of preachers who sympathize with al-Qa`ida are presently adapting to the UK’s decreasing tolerance

for Islamic radicalism by operating covertly, avoiding open clashes with the authorities and spurning the national media. Typically, such preachers—often born and bred in the United Kingdom—operate in small mosques, community centers and houses, frequently on the fringes of large towns. They will also use more prominent locations, such as sympathetic Islamic societies in universities, if such opportunities arise. These developments are largely in keeping with widespread predictions that any post-July 7 crackdown would fragment the jihadist movement and push it underground.

These lower profile figures have a greater ability to escape detection than their media-hungry predecessors. For example, Usman “Uzi” Ali, a former member of al-Muhajiroun, Omar Bakri’s pro-jihadist group, who has claimed to have helped British volunteers join the Taliban in 2001, preached pro-jihadist sermons for several years at an obscure mosque in Woolwich, East London, leaving only after the mosque’s trustees won a £30,000 court case to expel him.⁴ Soon afterward, Ali was appointed Muslim chaplain to the nearby state-funded Queen Elizabeth Hospital before being fired after Muslim patients complained about his anti-Western sermons.⁵ He now organizes prayers and meetings in gyms and community centers in East London and has told his followers that he aims to establish after-hours religious schools for their children to counter the “un-Islamic” teachings of mainstream schools and mosques.⁶ Although arrested on at least one occasion, he has not been prosecuted for any terrorism-related offenses.

Supporters of jihadist ideologies who run their own mosques have also found ways to continue spreading pro-jihadist teachings while avoiding prosecution. For example, in Luton, a town 30 miles north of London with a large Pakistani population, one mosque has apparently circumvented laws against incitement by using child imams who cannot be prosecuted as they are below the legal age of responsibility. In autumn 2007, one such child imam lectured worshippers on the injustices suffered by Muslims held

1 David Leppard, “Britain Under Attack as Bombers Strike at Airport,” *The Times* [London], July 1, 2007.

2 David Byers, “Soldier Kidnap Terror Plot: Six Charged,” *The Times*, February 9, 2007.

3 Adam Fresco, “Eleven Charged over Transatlantic Bomb Plot,” *TimesOnline*, August 21, 2006.

4 Personal interview, eyewitness, London, January 2008.

5 “Extremist Was Hospital Chaplain,” BBC, September 20, 2007.

6 Personal interview, eyewitness, London, November 2007.

in prison on anti-terror laws before calling on the congregation to “resist” the British government.⁷

Veteran Muslim Brotherhood members have similarly continued to incite their followers while carefully skirting anti-terror laws. For instance, Azzam Tamimi, a prominent defender of Hamas and a Muslim Brotherhood member, told an anti-Israel rally in London’s Trafalgar Square on July 10, 2006 that “if they don’t want peace, we have another language—and we have every right to use that language.”⁸ In some universities, radical Salafist preachers have similarly exploited traditions of tolerance and freedom of speech. For example, a Friday sermon given to hundreds of Muslims on the campus of Imperial College University in London in autumn 2007 reportedly ended in prayers for the “victory of the mujahidin everywhere in the world.”⁹

Challenges to Pro-Jihadist Ideologies

Although many Salafi-jihadi preachers have adapted to anti-terrorism measures, there are signs that many British Muslims are becoming more willing to tackle extremist preachers. During the 1980s and 1990s, British Salafi-jihadis enjoyed a free reign to promote their ideology as the most authentic form of Islamic practice and to present violence and martyrdom as the greatest acts of faith. Since then, jihadist ideologies have come under increasing attack. The most damaging attacks are those which have come from within the Salafist tradition.

Since the summer of 2007, one of the most prominent British opponents of the jihadist worldview has been Maajid Nawaz, a former member of the leadership council of Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT), a global group that wants to restore the caliphate. HT has been accused of radicalizing several British jihadists, most notably Omar Sharif, a British student who attempted to carry out a suicide bombing in Israel in April 2003. Nawaz has begun a theological refutation of HT’s ideology, publicizing his views through mainstream media as well as to all Muslim audiences. In many cases, the vitriolic responses to his arguments suggest that his ideas are often

perceived as dangerous not only to Islamism, but even to the Islamic faith as a whole.

Other damaging attacks on al-Qa`ida’s ideology have come from former jihadists. Usama Hasan, an imam who runs a prominent Salafist mosque in Leyton in East London, is typical. In 1990, Hasan traveled to Afghanistan where he received military training and briefly fought against the country’s communist government. After returning to the United Kingdom, he was heavily involved in radical Salafist activism; for example, he wrote influential critiques of “pacifists” such as Hamza Yusuf, a U.S.-based cleric.¹⁰ Today, Hasan preaches religious tolerance and integration at his mosque to a traditionalist Salafist congregation, which averages 800-1,000 strong on Fridays. “Usually if someone speaks against extremism, people say that he’s a government agent but with those of us who were in Afghanistan they can’t say that to us,” he said.¹¹

Such indigenous refutations of jihadist ideas augment similar criticisms made by Salafists abroad. The latest of these is by Sayyid Imam `Abd al-`Aziz Imam al-Sharif (also known as Dr. Fadl), the former spiritual leader of Egyptian Islamic Jihad presently imprisoned in Egypt, who recently wrote that Muslims who have an agreement or contract with a non-Muslim state (e.g. who have received a European visa or citizenship) are forbidden from attacking its citizens there.¹² His thesis has been swiftly attacked by British-based Salafists who perceive such critiques as a threat. In December 2007, for example, Tariq Ramadan, a prominent supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood, told students at London’s School of Oriental and African Studies that al-Sharif’s ideas were invalid because people held in Egyptian prisons “will say anything.”¹³

For many British Muslims, however, such critics of jihadism are increasingly being vindicated by setbacks suffered by jihadist movements in Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. Strategic errors by al-

Qa`ida—most notably its decision to target Iraqi civilians—have also done considerable damage to the jihadist cause and have boosted those who question the group’s Islamic legitimacy.

Conclusion

Salafi-jihadi networks in Britain have changed significantly since the 2005 London bombings. Yet, while there are signs that jihadist ideologies are losing ground to less violent forms of Islam, this process remains fragile. Any perceived victories for jihadist movements in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia or elsewhere at this critical time will likely greatly strengthen British radicals and could badly undermine Muslim attempts to challenge jihadist theologies—underscoring how U.S. success in Iraq and elsewhere remains critical to defeating Islamic extremism globally.

In addition, because Britain’s Muslims are disproportionately poor, young and unskilled, they remain vulnerable to extremist ideologies. Socio-economic factors do not directly cause jihadist violence, but they allow radical preachers to convince British Muslims to locate themselves within the global Muslim sense of victimhood and to believe that their situation can only be addressed through violence. Furthermore, the growing political savvy of the next generation of jihadist preachers poses new challenges to the United Kingdom’s security services—especially as the fragmentation and dispersal of radical networks makes potentially militant individuals harder to monitor. Together, these and other factors ensure that British-based Salafi-jihadi movements—even if declining in strength and influence—will continue to threaten the United Kingdom for years to come.

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7 Personal interview, eyewitness, London, October 2007.

8 Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zh6qO2J6dJk>.

9 Personal interview, eyewitness, London, November 2007.

10 Usama Hasan, “Recapturing Islam from the Pacifists,” available on various websites, November 14, 2001.

11 Personal interview, Usama Hasan, Masjid al-Tawhid, Leyton, East London, December 28, 2007.

12 Jarret Brachman, “Leading Egyptian Jihadist Sayyid Imam Renounces Violence,” *CTC Sentinel* 1:1 (2008).

13 Lecture by Tariq Ramadan, “Introduction to Islam and Islamism,” SOAS Middle East Society, November 17, 2007.

Al-Qa`ida's Extensive Use of the Internet

By Gabriel Weimann

AL-QA`IDA IS A DECENTRALIZED network of networks with no structure, hierarchy or center of gravity. It is based on a global alliance of autonomous groups and organizations, in a loosely-knit international network. This composition is strikingly similar to the internet with its unstructured network, reliance on a decentralized web of nodes with no center and no hierarchy. The parallel between the two may not be so coincidental: al-Qa`ida adopted the internet and has become increasingly reliant on it for its operations and survival. The 2001 war on terrorism destroyed al-Qa`ida's sanctuary in Afghanistan and forced the organization to transform into a highly decentralized network of alliances and confederations. For the new global network of al-Qa`ida, the internet became a crucial platform, carrier and bonding mechanism.

The internet, the most contemporary of media, has become the leading instrument of al-Qa`ida's communications, propaganda, recruitment and networking. Al-Qa`ida is now operating approximately 5,600 websites and 900 more are appearing each year.¹ They are in various formats including jihadist websites, forums, chat rooms, electronic boards and blogs. This report focuses on al-Qa`ida because in terms of quantity and sophistication, it is the leading terrorist abuser of the internet.

Al-Qa`ida Goes Virtual

In the late 1990s, al-Qa`ida launched its first website, www.alneda.com ("al-Neda" means "The Call" in Arabic). It was registered in Singapore and appeared on web servers in

Malaysia and Texas before it was taken off at the request of U.S. officials. It then changed its name and URL every few days, forced to move from server to server by citizens who complained to the Internet Service Providers (ISP) that were hosting the sites. Then, in late 2002, al-Qa`ida lost access to its internet domain because it expired and was acquired by a private citizen. The alneda.com site operators tried to reappear by using various server accounts

"The internet is becoming a major weapon in al-Qa`ida's strategy."

that had no associated domain name. When that failed, they started posting the alneda.com site as a "parasite": the site would be posted on a hijacked website until it was noticed and removed by the ISP. When it was removed, however, they would simply start the process again. In April 2003, al-Qa`ida's website came back online with the title "Faroq," yet flying the [alneda.com](http://alneda.com) banner. Although the new site and other al-Qa`ida sites moved frequently, administrators and readers publicized the site's new locations through chat room announcements, e-mail correspondence and links on other groups' websites.

Today, al-Qa`ida's organization is even more virtual. Its reliance on the free access and use of the internet is also one of the main reasons why the group is still a dangerous force. The internet is becoming a major weapon in al-Qa`ida's strategy to win supporters to its cause, preserve its decentralized structure, galvanize its members to action and raise funds. A widespread network of websites is used to feed directions and information from the group's top leadership to supporters and sympathizers around the world. Al-Qa`ida openly acknowledges the importance of the internet as a propaganda tool, as it did on one of its numerous websites:

Due to the advances of modern technology, it is easy to spread news, information, articles and other information over the internet. We strongly urge Muslim internet professionals to spread and disseminate news and information about the jihad through e-mail lists, discussion groups and their own websites. If you fail to do this, and

our site closes down before you have done this, we may hold you to account before Allah on the Day of Judgment... We expect our website to be opened and closed continuously. Therefore, we urgently recommend any Muslims that are interested in our material to copy all the articles from our site and disseminate them through their own websites, discussion boards and e-mail lists. This is something that any Muslim can participate in, easily, including sisters. This way, even if our sites are closed down, the material will live on with the Grace of Allah.²

The Communicative Uses

From the communicative perspective, terrorism is often viewed as a form of psychological warfare, and al-Qa`ida has attempted to wage such a campaign through the internet. For instance, al-Qa`ida uses the internet to spread disinformation, deliver threats intended to cause fear and disseminate grisly images of recent actions. The internet—an uncensored medium—allows even a small group to spread its message and exaggerate its importance and threat potential. Since the September 11 attacks, al-Qa`ida has saturated its websites with a string of announcements of

"The internet—an uncensored medium—allows even a small group to spread its message and exaggerate its importance and threat potential."

an impending major attack on U.S. targets. These warnings have received considerable media coverage, helping to create a sense of insecurity among audiences throughout the world and especially within the United States. Al-Qa`ida itself has repeatedly stated on jihadist websites that the 9/11 attacks not only inflicted concrete damage to the U.S. economy, but also psychological damage.

Another popular communicative use of the internet is for publicity and propaganda. Until the advent of the internet, terrorists' hopes of winning publicity for their causes

¹ The present report is based on a decade-long project of monitoring and analyzing terrorist presence on the internet, reported in numerous publications. See, for example, Gabriel Weimann, *Terror on the Internet* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2006); Gabriel Weimann, "Virtual Disputes: The Use of the Internet for Terrorist Debates," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29:7 (2006): pp. 623-639; Gabriel Weimann, "Virtual Training Camps: Terrorist Use of the Internet," in J. Forest ed., *Teaching Terror: Strategic and Tactical Learning in the Terrorist World* (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), pp. 110-132; Gabriel Weimann, "Terrorist Dot Com: Using the Internet for Terrorist Recruitment and Mobilization," in J. Forest ed., *The Making of a Terrorist* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005), pp. 53-65.

² Cited in "Jihad Online: Islamic Terrorists and the Internet," a report produced by the Anti-Defamation League, 2002.

and activities depended on attracting the attention of major media outlets. Now that terrorists themselves have direct control over the content of their websites, they are better able to manipulate how they are perceived by different target audiences and to shape their image and the image of their enemies. Thus, the most visible part of al-Qa`ida's online presence involves the spread of propaganda, which is created by the group's media branch, al-Sahab Media Production (al-Sahab means "The Cloud" in Arabic). This organization uses modern technology to produce its video statements and distribute them to the world. In addition to being released in Arabic, some published videos include English or other language subtitles, while more recent productions include videos in the English and German languages. Al-Qa`ida is also operating online radio and television broadcasting and an additional online production facility—the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF), an al-Qa`ida mouthpiece group.

Many terrorist groups, such as Hamas and al-Qa`ida, have transformed from strictly hierarchical organizations with designated leaders to affiliations of semi-independent cells that have no single commanding hierarchy.³ By utilizing the internet, these loosely interconnected groups are able to maintain contact with one another and with members of other terrorist groups. These different groups use the internet not only to exchange ideas and suggestions, but also to share practical information about constructing bombs, establishing cells and executing attacks.

By sharing information with other terrorist groups, al-Qa`ida became the "Jihad's Franchise" by using the internet to connect terrorist groups ranging from Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (and later the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat) to Pakistan's Jaysh-i-Muhammad, Chechen rebels, Iraqi insurgents or the al-Qa`ida cells in Indonesia and Lebanon.

The Operational Uses

Al-Qa`ida is also using the internet for operational purposes. After losing Afghanistan as a sanctuary and country in which to train, thousands of training manuals and documents were posted online. These documents range from instructions

on creating IEDs to producing chemical weapons. Terrorists also use the internet for data mining. They research information such as the schedules and locations of targets, including transportation facilities, nuclear power plants, airports and even counter-terrorism measures. According to

"Al-Qa`ida represents the worst that globalization and advanced community technologies have to offer."

then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, speaking on January 15, 2003, an al-Qa`ida training manual recovered in Afghanistan told its readers, "Using public sources openly and without resorting to illegal means, it is possible to gather at least 80 percent of all information required about the enemy."

Al-Qa`ida websites use maps, diagrams and photos of potential targets downloaded from popular websites such as Google Earth. One captured al-Qa`ida computer, for example, contained engineering and structural architecture features of a dam, which had been downloaded from the internet and which "would enable al-Qa`ida engineers and planners to simulate catastrophic failures."<sup>4</sup> In November 2005, one al-Qa`ida website, al-Firdaws, posted instructions on how to make nuclear dirty and biological bombs.⁵ The manual contained 80 pages of instructions and was dedicated as a "gift to the commander of the jihad fighters, Shaykh Usama bin Ladin, for the purpose of jihad for the sake of Allah."⁶ The website received some 57,000 hits.⁷

Al-Qa`ida and other terrorist groups also use the internet for fundraising. Al-Qa`ida's global fundraising network includes charities, non-governmental organizations and other financial institutions that use websites and internet-based chat rooms and forums. The internet can be used not only to solicit donations from sympathizers, but also to recruit and mobilize supporters

to play a more active role in support of terrorist activities or causes. Recruiters can log into chat rooms or visit cyber-cafes to find receptive members of the public, especially the youth. Electronic bulletin boards and user nets can also act as vehicles for reaching out to potential recruits.

Conclusion

Al-Qa`ida represents the worst that globalization and advanced community technologies have to offer. Al-Qa`ida is a virtual "network of networks," a jihadist franchise marketing its messages on the internet. Since 9/11, al-Qa`ida operatives have only improved their internet skills and increased their web presence. How should democratic societies respond to the challenge of online al-Qa`ida? At least two principles seem clear. First, it is necessary to become better informed and educated about al-Qa`ida's use of the internet so that its activities can be more efficiently monitored. The growing familiarity with terrorist online discourse may guide us to use the same internet to challenge the culture of death with an alternative discourse.

Second, while it is imperative to better defend our societies against terrorism, we must not in the process erode the qualities and values that make our societies worth defending. The use of advanced techniques to search, monitor, track and analyze communications carries inherent dangers. Although such technologies might prove helpful in the fight against cyber-terrorism and internet-savvy jihadists, they would also hand participating governments, especially authoritarian governments and agencies with little public accountability, tools with which to violate civil liberties domestically and abroad. The long-term implications could be damaging for democracies and their values, adding a heavy price in terms of diminished civil liberties to the high toll exacted by terrorism itself.

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³ Gabriel Weimann, *How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2004).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Uzi Mahnaimi and Tom Walker, "Al-Qaeda Woos Recruits with Nuclear Bomb Website," *Sunday Times* [London], November 6, 2005.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Al-Qa`ida's "MySpace": Terrorist Recruitment on the Internet

By Evan F. Kohlmann

IT HAS BEEN CLEARLY established that terrorist organizations have adopted unusual and innovative ways of using cutting-edge online technologies to expand their movements. Al-Qa`ida's principal media wing, al-Sahab Media Production, has recently released a flood of new audio and video recordings over Arabic-language internet chat forums, and has even solicited open questions from forum participants to be addressed by al-Qa`ida's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri. Yet, while much time and thought has been dedicated to studying the physical content broadcast over these chat forums, there has been far less attention focused on studying the individual users who populate them. In fact, during the past three years, these extremist forums have not only been used as a cover for al-Qa`ida's propaganda war, but have evolved into a disturbing MySpace-like social-networking hub for homegrown extremists around the world intent on becoming the next generation of terrorists, hijackers and even suicide bombers.

Muntada al-Ansar's Role in Recruitment

Arguably, no single such forum has achieved greater infamy than the now-defunct Muntada al-Ansar (The Supporters Forum)—the brainchild of, among others, a 21-year-old resident of London, Younis Tsouli (known as "Terrorist 007"). The Ansar forum's user database included an elite assortment of recruiters from multiple terrorist organizations affiliated with al-Qa`ida, including the actual head of Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi's media wing, Abu Maysarah al-Iraqi. Under the careful watch of Tsouli—and with the assistance of such figures as Abu Maysarah—the Ansar forum became a virtual matchmaking service for budding Islamic militants searching for a path to jihad, and particularly for the emerging mujahidin frontline in Iraq. In December 2004—in private messages sent over the Ansar forum—a user from Morocco contacted Tsouli and begged him for help in establishing direct contact with Zarqawi's network in Iraq: "I want to remind you that we would like to depart to the land of jihad. We await your call as though on the hottest of embers."¹ Upon learning that his travel

arrangements had been brokered on his behalf (over e-mail), the Moroccan became ecstatic and gloated,

Praise be to Allah, we are going to go in over there at the time when the Shaykh Usama has given the official attestation to the amir [Zarqawi]...The timing couldn't be better for us!!!!...it is serious, we have taken the bags [and] we can't go back.²

These men were far from being alone. Another frequent participant on Muntada al-Ansar was a young Sudanese national named Hassan Abdel Rahman. On the web, Rahman had assumed the nickname Zaman al-Hawan (The Era of Shame)—a decision which was

"The notion that even the al-Ekhlaas forum elite were setting forth on their own personal jihad missions was particularly inspiring to other members."

inspired by the title of an article published in al-Qa`ida's *Sawt al-Jihad* online magazine. Rahman first registered on the Ansar forum in April 2004; in only seven months, he authored at least 178 different messages. Later, one of his comrades on the forum wrote about him, stating, "Zaman al-Hawan was a hero of Islam who used to write in these forums, just like the rest of us...at first, he sat still and stayed behind, until Allah called him to join his brothers."³ In June 2004, Rahman posted a note on the forum which admonished fellow Muntada al-Ansar users,

who will step forward to defend the honor of Muslim women? O' young men of Muhammad, men of al-Tawhid...arise and aid your Muslim sisters in Iraq now that their honor has been assaulted by the filthy Christians...Where is your pride? Where are all the real men?⁴

In November 2004, at the height of the second battle for control of Falluja in Iraq, Rahman suddenly disappeared from the

forum. Months later, in March 2005, his fate became clear when another Sudanese national broke the news to the community on Muntada al-Ansar: "Allahu Akhbar...O' brothers, I have just come from the house of our brother Zaman al-Hawan...[he] executed the martyrdom operation in Ba`quba last Wednesday, may Allah accept him." Phone numbers were posted for Rahman's father and brother back in Sudan so that users could contact them and offer their congratulations.⁵ A well-known face on the forum—Saqr al-Jihad al-Afriqi (The African Falcon of Jihad)—offered more details about the final moments of Rahman's life:

Twelve minutes before the operation in Ba`quba, he called his family and explained his intentions. He told them that, in 15 minutes, news of his death would be delivered to them—and then he vanished in the cause of Allah... Twenty minutes later, another brother called his father to inform him of his son's departure to meet the virgins of paradise.

Even senior Muntada al-Ansar administrators contributed eulogies in honor of Rahman, such as the notorious Saif al-Islam al-Athari. In an open address to his departed comrade, al-Athari mourned,

you left people behind you heartbroken and went to achieve martyrdom. We thank Allah, the Islamic nation, the mujahidin, and all of the supporters of jihad for inspiring you...May Allah accept you in paradise.⁶

Indeed, forum administrators such as al-Athari were eagerly encouraging faithful users to follow the path of online martyrs like Hassan Abdel Rahman. In August 2005, Saif al-Islam al-Athari was again the one who broke the "good news" to Muntada al-Ansar users about a "meeting of Ansar forum members" inside Iraq:

This story is fascinating and emotional because it is closely linked to...the Ansar forum...One of our brothers who was a member on the Ansar forum and was originally from a country adjacent to Iraq decided to leave and fight in the cause of Allah. Allah made it possible for him to meet with an additional five brothers from other countries who had all come to fight in the cause of Allah...

Court, London, prosecution exhibit FK-5, 2007.

2 Ibid.

3 Posted on www.inn4news.net, April 19, 2005.

4 Posted on www.inn4news.net, April 19, 2005.

5 Posted on www.ekhlaas.com, March 24, 2005.

6 Posted on www.inn4news.net, April 19, 2005.

1 Regina v. Tsouli, Daour and Mughal, Woolwich Crown

Later, after talking with one another, they all realized that they were fellow users on the Ansar forum, and that made them very happy. They began crying and their love for Allah increased...I also inform you that one of the brothers who is a member on the Ansar forum will soon rejoin his beloved comrades in the land of jihad and martyrdom, the land of Mesopotamia, and he will also participate in a suicide operation.⁷

Muntada al-Ansar's Legacy

Unfortunately, the shuttering of Muntada al-Ansar in late 2005 and the subsequent arrest and conviction of Younis Tsouli have done almost nothing to deter this disturbing trend. In the wake of the Ansar forum's disappearance, other online chat venues have taken over and, once again, are serving as an active recruiting ground

“This is the hidden dark side of online social-networking—as a virtual factory for the production of terrorists.”

for al-Qa`ida—including the ubiquitous al-Ekhlaas forum. Although the al-Ekhlaas site has actually been in existence since the era of Muntada al-Ansar, it has particularly gained in public prominence and notoriety during the last year, as other similar sites have been forced to deal with intermittent service blackouts. Al-Ekhlaas has become so sophisticated that it now posts slick, animated advertisements for upcoming recordings of Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri. As such, it serves as one of al-Qa`ida's most important public mouthpieces.

In late May 2007, a widely-admired administrator on the al-Ekhlaas forum—using the handle “Mujahid 1988”—posted a new message, declaring,

I say goodbye to you, I loved you all. Dear brothers, I say farewell to you and I thank Allah who has enabled all of us to follow the path of jihad. I am filled with joy. Soon my humble will, that I sent a few days ago to one of the brothers, shall be posted to you all...

may all of us meet in paradise. You should keep on the path of jihad and do not forget to pray for us. All I ask you, dear brothers, is to pray to Allah that I may achieve martyrdom.⁸

The notion that even the al-Ekhlaas forum elite were setting forth on their own personal jihad missions was particularly inspiring to other members. Mujahid 1988's initial farewell received a torrent of responses from other users. A second administrator wrote back,

Allahu Akhbar...believe me, my friend, the words are frozen in my mouth as I stammer and do not know what to say. I am happy and sad at the same time, joyful for you and for all the mujahidin, and pleased because you have put your knowledge into action and you were not merely content with staying on the internet forums without entering the real world, where killings and death truly are.

Other users offered a chorus of prayers that Mujahid 1988 be granted martyrdom “and receive it in a hail of bullets.”⁹

The example set by Mujahid 1988 was a powerful signal to other aspiring cyber-terrorists about the necessity of gathering useful information over the internet and then “putting it to good use” on the battlefields of the mujahidin. One such user was a North African militant operating under the pseudonym Abu al-Hijja al-Maghribi. In his various posts on the al-Ekhlaas forum, Abu al-Hijja explored a range of topics—including sharing ideas for new graphic designs with al-Qa`ida fighters in Iraq and discussing the best methods to destroy U.S. Apache helicopters and Abrams tanks. After a curious absence, he reappeared in November 2007 with a message titled, “The Will of Brother Abu al-Hijja al-Maghribi, Member of the al-Ekhlaas Forum”:

Dear brothers...I did go suddenly to Iraq, praise be to Allah for his blessing. The brothers here have allowed me to get on the internet for one hour and I have used it to send a message to you all. I am full of happiness for coming here and...I am a member in all the jihadist forums under various names...I ask Allah to use these forums to glorify Islam...Saying farewell to all of you

brothers is indeed a hard thing to do...I would like to thank you personally...the brothers in al-Nusrah forum. I also send my regards to...all al-Ekhlaas forum members. I promise you that I will fight every infidel and crusader, and may Allah grant us martyrdom. I also inform you that our brother Mujahid 1988 is safe and sound, praise be to Allah for his blessing.¹⁰

Conclusion

In the same way that traditional terrorist training camps once served as beacons for would-be jihadists, online support forums such as Muntada al-Ansar and al-Ekhlaas now operate as black holes in cyberspace, drawing in and indoctrinating sympathetic recruits, teaching them basic military skills and providing a web of social contacts that bridges directly into the ranks of al-Qa`ida. Rather than simply using the web as a weapon to destroy the infrastructure of their enemies, al-Qa`ida is using it instead as a logistical tool to revolutionize the process of terrorist enlistment and training. Ironically, these chat forums are based on the same viral methodology behind the success of many contemporary American high-tech enterprises. This is the hidden dark side of online social-networking—as a virtual factory for the production of terrorists.

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⁸ Posted on www.ekhlaas.ws, May 31, 2007.

⁹ Posted on www.ekhlaas.ws, May 31, 2007.

¹⁰ Posted on www.ekhlaas.ws, November 15, 2007.

⁷ Posted on www.ansary.info, August 21, 2005.

Combating Terrorism Through a Counter-Framing Strategy

By Robert Wesley

IDEOLOGY IS OF GREAT importance to understanding all social movements, and the global jihadist movement is no exception. Indeed, many policymakers and terrorism analysts have emphasized the significance of ideology for determining the outcome of the current conflict. Unfortunately, however, neither the conceptual intricacies nor the methods of analysis for a counter-ideology approach have been usefully articulated. Although it is true that ideology plays a major role in the communicative, mobilizing and indoctrinative aspects of this conflict, focusing counter-movement strategies around "countering ideology" is probably not the most promising vector of influence for Western state-level efforts.

This article presents some introductory argumentation found in a larger study on improving analytical methodologies for combating the global jihadist movement.¹ Governments should distinguish between the ideological tenets and framing practices of the jihadist movement, while concentrating on the latter to more efficaciously influence the protracted nature of the conflict. This distinction is an essential prerequisite to formulating a comprehensive and methodologically-sound grand strategy. The counter-framing approach essentially provides a set of concepts that allows both the analyst and policymaker to better understand how to reduce mobilization to both the ideology and the strategy of al-Qa`ida by influencing the connectivity between content and audience.

Before addressing the differing potential approaches to countering mobilization to the ideas and strategy of al-Qa`ida or the jihadist movement, it is helpful to touch on the definitional, congruency and differentiating aspects of the related concepts of ideology and framing as conceptualized in social movement theory. This is the first step to understanding the difference between a counter-ideological and a counter-framing approach.

Operationalizing Ideology and Framing

Although the concept of framing processes as applied to social movements is widely understood, surprisingly a common conception of what constitutes "ideology" does not exist. In general terms, the framing process refers to how an organization or movement articulates its beliefs and strategy with the view of mobilizing support. The framing process approach developed by David A. Snow et al. was itself borrowed from John Wilson's deconstruction of ideology, using the concepts of diagnosis, prognosis and rationale.² Therefore, what is the difference between the related concepts of ideologies and frames designed to mobilize collective action? Although both concepts involve the value and belief systems of an organization or movement, there are important distinctions that need to be elaborated in order to provide a sound foundation for developing counter-strategies.

Pamela Oliver and Hank Johnston provide a rough distinction, writing that "framing points to process, while ideology points to content."³ Robert Benford and Snow elaborate further, mentioning that ideology can refer to a

fairly pervasive and integrated set of beliefs and values that have considerable staying power... In contrast, collective action frames function as innovative amplifications and extensions of, or antidotes to, existing ideologies or components of them. Accordingly, ideology functions as both a constraint and resource in relation to framing processes and collective action frames.⁴

It also should be mentioned that ideologies, or specific value and belief sets, are not necessarily homogeneously accepted throughout an organization

or movement. In fact, the history of social movements—including al-Qa`ida⁵—reveals that specific ideological components may not even be understood by all adherents nor articulated publicly. These facts problematize a purely counter-ideological approach. It is also true—and especially so in respect to the conflict against the jihadist movement—that individuals and organizations of many types and orientations may share a broader cultural ideology and yet disagree over collective action processes. For example, there are numerous relatively peaceful Muslim political, religious and social organizations, as well as individuals, who subscribe to general Salafist ideological tenets yet denounce violence as a form of expression or strategy. These facts further support the pursuance of an approach that negates these inconsistencies by focusing on the communicative links between organizational leaders and potential adherents, thereby forgoing the risk of getting bogged down in detailed ideological discourse—an area of which Western governments have shown little competence.

Indeed, the framing approach encompasses ideological developments, while moving beyond the mere description of their details to elaborate the process of how these developments are used for the benefit of organizational or movemental growth. The framing process also reaches beyond pure ideological discourse to include the strategic and interactive practices of movement adherents and their audiences such as potential supporters, governments and rival organizations.

An Argument for Counter-Framing

There is clearly a complex and dynamic interactive process within the jihadist movement that necessitates a specific analytical framework. It is fair to say that for the jihadist movement, in everything is ideology, yet not everything is pure ideology. To describe this intricate dynamic, the framing perspective is immensely useful.

Analysis of ideology can determine what specific ideological developments have occurred, but there is no current framework (or methodology) from which to analyze why these developments matter. Framing analysis also helps better explain the

¹ The author is currently writing a monograph on framing analysis and counter-strategies.

² David A. Snow, E. Burke Rochford Jr., Steven K. Worden and Robert D. Benford, "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization and Movement Participation," *American Sociological Review* 51:4 (1986); John Wilson, *Introduction to Social Movements* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

³ Pamela E. Oliver and Hank Johnston, "What a Good Idea! Frames and Ideologies in Social Movement Research," *Mobilization* 5:1 (2000).

⁴ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* (2000).

⁵ See, for example, Vahid Brown, *Cracks in the Foundation: Leadership Schisms in al-Qa`ida from 1989-2006* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2007).

process of ideological interactions—“how” and “why” efforts were successful or unsuccessful. Furthermore, it is not always possible to empirically observe ideological activities. As Snow and Benford point out, such activities could in fact be “mentalistic or cognitive” in nature, and thus difficult to assess.⁶

Distinguishing between the interactive processes of framing and ideological development is essential to understanding the communication processes of the jihadist movement and al-Qa`ida proper. To be sure, the movement is dependent on its ideological foundations to maintain

“Part of this strategy entails disruption of the further organizational development of al-Qa`ida from a network into a larger movement.”

cohesiveness in spite of its decentralized structure. It is also dependent on an active communications program that places a heavy emphasis on core framing activities to articulate its ideological foundations while mobilizing additional and essential support.

One of the objectives of the study from which this article is adopted is to provide a framework for monitoring and influencing the success of the jihadist movement's communication practices and by extension the longevity of the overall conflict. At this juncture there is no existing analytical framework in open literature for understanding jihadist communications in the context of their effectiveness. This study does not argue that ideology and its analysis can be ignored, but rather that viewing the prospects for Western state-level interventional activities through a counter-ideological lens is much less promising in terms of its success than an approach that focuses on framing analysis and its influence. Influencing potential acceptance and adherence to an ideology is difficult from a distance. In contrast,

there is a much higher potential to disrupt the resonance of the message for these ideas and acceptance of the violent strategy designed to achieve them.

In conflicts where ideology plays a leading role, the ideas and broader ideologies involved can linger well beyond the cessation of violence, and thus the primary objective for any such strategy should be focused firstly on the removal or minimization of violent components. Part of this strategy entails disruption of the further organizational development of al-Qa`ida from a network into a larger movement. The second component of the strategy is to constrict mobilization of adherents to the network of organizations. This study argues that the best way of minimizing mobilization is to influence the linkages between organization members and potential mobilized adherents. These linkages are many, but most promisingly are the communication practices of the movement—specifically the relative salience and resonance of frames.

Furthermore, there are additional indicators that suggest a predominately ideology-focused approach is less encouraging. We can see from viewing the historical development of al-Qa`ida and the jihadist movement that this process of ideological development occurs gradually. Since this process is based on a somewhat—but still interpretative—pre-structured religious system, the process is less dynamic than the prognostic framing and alignment activities of the organizations involved. It also seems to be much less malleable and much more consistent over time.

The prospect of influencing intramovemental ideological change is probably low at the current stage in the conflict. Although this article is primarily concerned with Western state-level activities, it should be mentioned that local authorities in predominately Muslim countries (such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia) have had some success in “encouraging” imprisoned leaders to revise the ideological foundations of their organizations.⁷ Although it is important to analyze ideological developments, without an active framing process the movement would not grow and mobilization would prove difficult. Thus, framing analysis is a

crucial component of this conflict for both the jihadists and those wishing to minimize their success.

Al-Qa`ida and the jihadist movement's recruitment and radicalization practices provide additional evidence of the importance of strategic framing activities to the vitality of the organization and movement. Recruits who join al-Qa`ida-linked groups have generally undergone some sort of ideological indoctrination process, many times in the form of classroom or camp-type environments, where doctrinal growth can be closely controlled. In more constrained operational environments such as those in Europe, smaller groups of peers—many times led by a more experienced “guide”—become an initial orientational community for potential recruits.⁸ Evidence from arrests in Spain and elsewhere in Europe indicate that strategic communications materials such as videos and literature were of central importance to the acceptance of jihadist ideology and strategy—or diagnostic and prognostic frames.⁹

The fact that many recruits have attempted to join jihadist groups without fully subscribing to or fully understanding jihadist ideology strongly indicates that an ideological conversion has not yet fully taken root. Since this “radicalization” process can take place at a later stage after initial enlistment or exploration, it seems axiomatic that mobilization is not necessarily based on a purely ideological acceptance, but rather on the successful mobilization result of either the framing processes of human operatives or of the more general framing processes of the wider communications efforts—such as the so-called “Media Jihad.” Indeed, evidence from internet chat rooms and other sources indicate that a level of mobilization (both mental and physical alignment) for the jihadist conflict theatres have occurred through communication efforts. These trends are yet another strong indication that the framing process—especially through

6 David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, “Clarifying the Relationship Between Framing and Ideology in the Study of Social Movements: A Comment on Oliver and Johnston,” *Mobilization* 5:1 (2000).

7 Examples of notable leaders include Sayyid Imam and Najih Ibrahim.

8 See, for example, Daniel Fried, U.S. Senate Subcommittee Testimony, April 5, 2006; Edwin Bakker, “Jihadi Terrorists in Europe: Their Characteristics and the Circumstances in which they Joined the Jihad,” Clingendael Security Paper, December 2006.

9 See, for example, Javier Jordan and Robert Wesley, “The Threat of Grassroots Jihadi Networks: A Case Study from Ceuta, Spain,” *Terrorism Monitor* 1:3 (2007).

strategic communications—is a vital link between the movement and its potential supporters.

Conclusion

It is important to emphasize the inextricable relationship between ideology and the framing process for a movement. For this reason, this study does not argue that one analytical or policy approach should be discarded completely in favor of another. What this study does argue is that for Western authorities wishing to impact the longevity of this conflict, a strategy needs to be developed that is focused on the linkages that enable the jihadist movement to sustain itself over the long-term. It is thus important to develop a method for assessing the success of this interactive process between the movement and potential adherents as well as providing a framework for influencing this interactive dynamic. Such an integrated analytical/policy feedback approach does not functionally exist. The counter-framing approach provides the most accurate and thorough method for optimizing grand strategy to better identify areas of opportunity for influence, while importantly providing a feedback mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the efforts of both sides of the conflict.

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Partner or Spoiler: The Case of the Islamic Army in Iraq

By Pascale Combelles Siegel

THE ISLAMIC ARMY IN IRAQ (IAI) is often referred to as an Islamist-nationalist organization fighting to secure a space for Sunnis in the post-Saddam political era. The subtext of this view is that the IAI is an insurgent organization with which the U.S. and Iraqi governments can possibly reconcile to move toward a peaceful post-Saddam era. Recurring rumors of informal negotiations between the IAI and U.S. government representatives and evidence of IAI military engagement against al-Qa`ida in Iraq have reinforced the image of the IAI as a “reasonable insurgent.”

This image, however, does not comport with the group’s public statements. Through a series of pronouncements during the past year, the IAI does not appear as a moderate Islamist-nationalist organization willing to compromise in order to be reintegrated into

“The IAI castigates the Shi`a as ‘polytheists,’ calls Shi`a political leaders ‘Safawis’ and characterizes the ISF as ‘apostates.’”

the post-Saddam political system, but rather as a rejectionist group seeking to make a blank slate of the current system in favor of a new political arrangement solely designed by the Iraqis based on Shari`a. These tenets of the IAI’s ideology have become those of the larger fronts in which the IAI is participating: the Reformation and Jihad Front (RJF) and the Political Council of the Iraqi Resistance (PCIR).

A Rejectionist Political Platform

In a string of statements released during the past few months, the IAI (like the fronts it joined, the RJF and the PCIR) has repeatedly reaffirmed its opposition to the presence of coalition forces in Iraq, the Iraqi government and the post-Saddam political system. The IAI decries the occupation of Iraq as an “act of aggression,” both

“illegitimate and unjust.”¹ The group argues that the ultimate goal of U.S. policy in Iraq is to plunder Iraq’s wealth and advance the “Crusader-Zionist” plot to divide the umma and subdue the great nation of Iraq. As a result, the IAI consistently claims that “repelling the Western Crusader-Zionist campaign” is its top priority. To illustrate its commitment to this proclaimed goal, the IAI releases daily rosters of attack claims against coalition forces.

The IAI is no less harsh on the current Iraqi government. Applying its own version of the fruit of the poisoned tree, the IAI unequivocally opposes the Iraqi government. Indeed, because the current government was established under rules decided by the United States, it has no legitimacy. In May 2007, the IAI subscribed to the political program of the RJF, which states:

We do not recognize the constitution which was written during the time of the occupiers...We do not recognize any political games starting [sic] by the ill-reputed Bremer’s council up to his sectarian agent, al-Maliki... We do not recognize the sectarian elections or what it was based on... We do not recognize any treaty or any agreement held by these consecutive governments.²

The IAI also accuses the Iraqi government of being sectarian and serving the interests of Iraqi Shi`a at the expense of Sunnis. Therefore, in October 2007, the IAI characterized the Iraqi government as “bringing to the Sunni nothing but misery, torture and displacement.”<sup>3</sup> In particular, the IAI routinely accuses the Iraqi government of covering the nefarious activities of Shi`a militias (the Badr Corps and the Mahdi Army) and of using the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) for campaigns of Sunni brutalization. As a consequence, the IAI proposes to “reconstruct the Iraqi government on a just basis with a government of professionals.” In short, the IAI argues for a coup d’état against the elected government.

1 Islamic Army in Iraq, “Jihad and Reformation Front Establishing Statement,” press communiqué, English version, May 3, 2007.

2 Ibid.

3 Islamic Army in Iraq, “Press Statement on the Statement of a Member of al-Maliki’s Government,” press communiqué, English version, September 17, 2007.

Additionally, the IAI rejects the current body of legislation that underpins the present political system. The IAI put it plainly in May 2007 when it pledged:

We do not recognize any treaty or any agreement held by these consecutive governments...We do not recognize the constitution which was written during the time of the occupiers and we do not recognize any bill that opposes the Shari`a of Allah.⁴

The IAI went even further in its rejectionist approach in the PCIR political platform, stating: "There is no Shari`a legitimacy for any constitution, any ruling regime or law which was legislated during the occupation."⁵ Practically, these statements deny the democratic legitimacy of the current political process. They also imply that there

"More generally, IAI propaganda is replete with Salafist references."

is an inherent and irrepressible contradiction between Shari`a-based and Western-based legislations. Pushed to its logical conclusion, the IAI stance means that what comes from the West must be, by definition, anti-Islamic.

The IAI does not limit itself to criticizing the current political system. To demonstrate its commitment to changing that system, the IAI routinely attacks Iraqi government targets, principally ISF members and facilities. It also encourages Sunni politicians who have opted for a reintegration strategy to withdraw their support. The IAI's stance regarding those Sunnis involved in the political process only confirms this hypothesis. The IAI praised the Iraqi Accordance Front for leaving the government in July, but condemned Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi for meeting with Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

A Radical Discourse

The IAI does not shy away from using Salafist fundamentalist and sectarian references, akin to those used by the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), al-Qa`ida's affiliate in the country. The IAI castigates the Shi`a as "polytheists,"

calls Shi`a political leaders "Safawis" and characterizes the ISF as "apostates." All of these references are negatively connoted. In Islam, polytheists are considered infidels because their venerating multiple divinities directly contradicts with the Islamic principle of the unicity of God. Salafi-jihadi ideologues have argued that the Shi`a are polytheists because they venerate the twelve imams. The term Safawi refers to the Persian empire of the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries that extended well into modern Iraq (Basra, Najaf, Karbala, Baghdad). The connotation here is that Iraqi Shi`a are outside the bounds of both the Islamic and national (Iraqi) community. The characterization of bona fide Iraqi Shi`a political parties as "Safawis" is intended to cast doubt on the legitimacy and allegiance of millions of Iraqi Shi`a, intrinsically suspected of betraying Iraq's best interests to further their supposed sectarian interests.

More generally, IAI propaganda is replete with Salafist references. French journalists Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot, who were taken hostage by the IAI in 2004, testified to the radical ideology underpinning the group. "References to 'Chief Osama' abounded...and there was much talk of living by Muslim law," said Chesnot upon returning from 124 days in captivity. His colleague, Malbrunot, concurred:

They are adamant jihadists, convinced that they are waging war to defend the Muslim faith against the West. There was a lot of talk about Chief Osama, references to Chechnya and how the Muslim world is fighting the Western world in Chechnya, Pakistan and Afghanistan.⁶

Perhaps more importantly, these references are also those of the ISI and the Salafi-jihadi community that support al-Qa`ida and its affiliates around the world.

Divergences Between IAI and ISI

Nevertheless, the IAI could be using this ideological framework to gain and maintain support for its actions as the IAI retains very different political goals than the ISI. The IAI does not, for example, claim to have an internationalist agenda. It has been regularly rumored that the IAI has established contacts with U.S. representatives and that it has engaged in

informal talks with the U.S. government. In addition, the group has seemingly been endeared to U.S. goals by publicly and physically clashing with the ISI since mid-2007. Indeed, the IAI publicly denounced the ISI for committing crimes against other mujahidin and for trying to submit other groups to its control. Subsequently, IAI members have attacked ISI strongholds in Anbar Province and Baghdad.⁷ It is possible that if the IAI were able to achieve power, it would adopt a more secular and non-sectarian approach to governing.

The significance of these developments, however, should not be overstated. First, the informal talks have not borne fruit. According to public accounts of the discussions, the IAI posed unacceptable conditions for engaging in official negotiations. These include setting a timetable for a U.S. troop withdrawal, the recognition of the Iraqi Islamic resistance as the sole legitimate representative of the Iraqi people and the trial of all officials involved in murders or corruption since the occupation. Second, the IAI's conflict with the ISI should not be misconstrued and it seems that it does not mean a complete rejection of the tenets of the ISI. In the past few months, the IAI has

"Indeed, the IAI publicly denounced the ISI for committing crimes against other mujahidin and for trying to submit other groups to its control."

called on "all those who believe...[who] conform to Islamic rule...[and] who do not wage war against others" to unite and work together.⁸ Considering its past expressed positions against the Shi`a, it is not a stretch to hypothesize that the IAI is actually offering an olive branch to the ISI if it stops coercing other insurgent groups under its control and killing other mujahidin.

⁷ For a detailed description of the relationship between the ISI and the IAI, see Evan F. Kohlmann, "State of the Sunni Insurgency in Iraq: August 2007," The NEFA Foundation, August 2007.

⁸ Islamic Army in Iraq, "A Call to the Honorable Nation," press communiqué, October 19, 2007.

⁴ Islamic Army in Iraq, "Jihad and Reformation Front Establishing Statement," press communiqué, English version, May 3, 2007.

⁵ The announcement was reported by al-Jazira.

⁶ Jody K. Biehl, "Four Months on Planet Bin Laden," *Spiegel Online*, January 21, 2005.

Conclusion

The radical Islamism rhetoric that the IAI uses might have a long-term pernicious effect. Whether or not the IAI leadership adheres to or simply uses the radical Islamism rhetoric to gain exposure and support, its mere use may facilitate IAI's foot soldiers passage to international jihadism in the future. The IAI's followers will have received in Iraq an ideological formation into Islamist radicalism, accepting some of the fundamental premises of al-Qa`ida's ideology. Among these premises are the belief that the Sunni community is being wronged and under threat from a supposed "Crusader-Zionist" complot; that those declared non-believers can and should be attacked; that armed struggle is the way to redress these torts; and that the Qur'an and sunna provide the answers to most questions.

Even if the IAI does not seek to export its jihad outside of Iraq officially or does not seek to restore the caliphate in the Middle East (key strategic differences with the ISI), its demobilized foot soldiers, rich of battlefield experience and molded into a rather radical brand of Salafism, might be primed for rolling over into international jihadism. The IAI might not be using the terms "Zionist-Crusader complot" or "takfiris" or "Shari'a" in exactly the same sense as al-Qa`ida's Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri, but by using a similar vocabulary the IAI might ultimately facilitate the passage to a more extreme interpretation. In the end, al-Qa`ida is likely to be the benefactor of this confusion.

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The Challenge of Islamist Militancy in India

By Paul Staniland

ISLAMIST MILITANT ORGANIZATIONS have targeted India for more than a decade. Bombings have bloodied the sprawling metropolises of Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad, as well as smaller cities and towns throughout India. Dramatic attacks have also hit the historic Red Fort in Delhi, the Indian Parliament and Kashmir's state assembly. Police and paramilitaries stand permanent guard outside government buildings, popular tourist sites and crowded markets, while terrorism alerts have become familiar headlines. For an India experiencing unprecedented economic growth, Islamist terrorism is a grim reminder of South Asia's bitter divisions.

As with much of the political violence that has roiled the subcontinent, a corrosive mixture of external and domestic causes lie behind this terrorist threat. Pakistan's sponsorship of militant groups fighting in Kashmir has allowed these organizations to build their capabilities for pushing violence into the Indian heartland. At home, a small but sufficient proportion of Indian Muslims appear to have been radicalized by vicious anti-Muslim riots instigated and enabled by nationalist Hindu politicians. While the vast majority of the 140 million Indian Muslims have no interest in militancy, a driven few believe that there can be no justice or security for Muslims in a "Hindu Raj." This combination presents a multilayered challenge to an Indian state lacking the resources of its richer peers and beset by serious challenges of development and governance.

Background to Today's Violence

When British India was partitioned in 1947, millions left their homes amidst chaos and carnage—Hindus and Sikhs fled from the newly-formed Pakistan into India, and many Muslims abandoned the historic core of the Mughal Empire in north India.¹ The riots and massacres of partition were quickly followed by a full-scale war over the disputed princely state of Jammu and Kashmir—situated between the two new countries—which had

a Muslim-majority but was ruled by a Hindu maharaja. This violence bred a foundational enmity between India and Pakistan that has continued for six decades. Further wars in 1965 and 1971 and the development of nuclear weapons by both states hardened this "conflict unending."²

For the purposes of understanding the recent wave of Islamist terrorism within India, the year 1989 marked an important moment. It was then that a serious insurgency erupted in Kashmir led by Kashmiris seeking independence, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). This rebellion was backed by Pakistan, which began supplying arms and training in large quantities to

"The glories of past Mughal dominance combined with broader Islamist ideologies, creating a South Asian jihadist milieu."

individuals and organizations fighting in Kashmir.³ Drawing on the lessons of Afghanistan in the 1980s, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) believed that it could bleed India while safely shielded behind Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

The JKLF was quickly marginalized by its own organizational failures, Indian counter-insurgency strategy and Pakistani dissatisfaction with the JKLF's pro-independence ideology. A more disciplined, pro-Pakistan group rose to the fore built around the infrastructure of the Jamaat-i-Islami political party—the Hizb al-Mujahidin. Hizb al-Mujahidin carried the banners of Islam and Kashmir in the early and mid-1990s, but largely restricted its violence to the confines of the Indian-administered state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Indian counter-insurgency efforts expanded apace, containing, though not eliminating, the Hizb al-Mujahidin. In the mid- and late-1990s, militant organizations with a dominantly Pakistani recruiting base began to

2 Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

3 Stephen P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), pp. 53-4; Owen Bennett-Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 86-91.

1 Two recent overviews of partition are: Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Stanley Wolpert, *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of the British Empire in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

take up an increasingly prominent role in the Kashmir conflict.⁴ Harkat-ul-Mujahidin and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, soon followed by Jaysh-i-Muhammad, were based heavily in Pakistan and had ties to groups in Afghanistan; Harkat-ul-Mujahidin and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba had been formed to fight in Afghanistan and consequently shifted attention to Kashmir. They had more expansive aims than either the JKLF or Hizb al-Mujahidin, both of which drew the bulk of their cadres from Kashmir itself. The new wave of powerful jihadist groups, though different in important ways from one another, had visions of shattering the Indian state and “liberating” its Muslim components.⁵ The glories of past Mughal dominance combined with broader Islamist ideologies, creating a South Asian jihadist milieu.⁶

Pakistan provided these groups with extensive sanctuary, resources and assistance in infiltrating across the Line of Control. In this way, Kashmir laid an important organizational basis for the terrorism that would come to haunt India's streets—the Harkat, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and Jaysh-i-Muhammad would take the guns, money and training of the ISI and strike beyond Kashmir.

For this to become a sustained campaign, however, these organizations needed local assistance from Indian Muslims. Although partition divided the subcontinent along religious lines, many millions of Muslims remained in India. They tended to be less educated and poorer than the middle and upper classes who would join the elite of the new Pakistan. This relative poverty has continued—Muslims lie toward the bottom of most key statistical categories.⁷ Some of

India's Muslims have also been influenced by tolerant strands of Islam, born of the subcontinent's exposure to numerous faiths and sects over centuries. This diversity has provided an important check on radicalism, as has the ability of Muslims to become involved in India's democratic politics as candidates, workers and government employees. The Muslim population has not historically proved a source of violent radicalism or support for Pakistan-backed militants.⁸

Hindu-Muslim Clashes

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, India witnessed a remarkable mass mobilization by Hindu nationalist leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Rallying their followers around Hindu symbols and narratives, they argued that Muslims had been appeased by the ruling Congress party. Accompanying this charge was the insinuation that Indian Muslims were secretly supporters of Pakistan, and thus a fifth column within India. The rise of Hindu nationalism triggered a wave of communal riots that targeted Muslims at the direct instigation of politicians or with the acquiescence of a politicized police force.⁹ Small groups of Muslims began developing self-defense organizations in response.¹⁰ The Hindu nationalist “saffron wave” reached a brutal crescendo in 1992 and 1993 after a Hindu mob destroyed a mosque in the north Indian city of Ayodhya. They claimed the mosque had been built on the birthsite of a Hindu god, Lord Rama.¹¹ Violence swept much of the country, killing thousands.

Bombay (now Mumbai), India's financial capital, was the scene of vicious riots. Several months later the city was rocked by a series of coordinated bombings that left 257 dead and more than 1,000 wounded. These bombings

have been widely seen as retaliation for the anti-Muslim riots and were committed by Muslims of a variety of backgrounds.¹² The murderous backlash against the Hindu nationalists' fusing of politics and violence had begun. The overwhelming majority of Muslims abhorred terrorism, but some were willing to turn to death and fear themselves.

The late 1990s saw a slow and partial merging of these two dynamics—a conflict in Kashmir with a growing presence of radical Pakistani groups, and a tiny but existent portion of India's Muslims willing to listen to their message and eventually accept it. Other factors were also at play, particularly the ability of Islamists to base out of Bangladesh, and the spread of sophisticated technology and explosives. This period saw an upsurge in highly visible bombings believed to have been committed by Islamist militants. Militant groups used support within India to hide, plan and receive logistics, particularly through the indigenous Students Islamic Movement of India.¹³ In 1999, for example, an Indian Airlines jet was hijacked; in 2000, Delhi's Red Fort was attacked by Lashkar-e-Tayyiba; and in December 2001 the Indian Parliament itself was assaulted by a team of militants linked to Jaysh-i-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba.¹⁴ The latter attack nearly took India and Pakistan to war, resulting in a standoff between mobilized armies.¹⁵

Although war was avoided, a different kind of tragedy nevertheless lay in store. In February 2002, Hindus returning from a pilgrimage to Ayodhya were burned to death in a railway car in the state of Gujarat. While the source of the fire remains unclear (it may have been accidental), rumors immediately spread that Muslims were to blame. The BJP government is then alleged to have largely allowed radical Hindu nationalists to attack Muslims with relative impunity for several days, killing well over a

4 This is the theme of Manoj Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion: Kashmir in the Nineties* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1999); see also Navnita Chadha Behera, *Demystifying Kashmir* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006).

5 Another group with a smaller presence in Kashmir but a significant role in terrorist attacks within India is the Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islam, which has an important Bangladesh branch. “HuJI's Role in Focus Again,” *Times of India*, August 27, 2007.

6 Overviews of Islamist terrorism in South Asia can be found in Mariam Abou Zahab and Olivier Roy, *Islamist Networks: The Afghan-Pakistan Connection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Zahid Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); and C. Christine Fair and Peter Chalk, *Fortifying Pakistan* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2007).

7 Details of Muslim economic and social marginalization can be found in the Indian government's Sachar

Report, discussed in Somini Sengupta, “Report Shows Muslims Near Bottom of Social Ladder,” *New York Times*, November 29, 2006.

8 One of the reasons for the failure of Pakistan's attempt to seize Kashmir in 1965 was the lack of support it received from Kashmiri Muslims.

9 Steven Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Ashutosh Varshney, *Civic Life and Ethnic Conflict: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).

10 Praveen Swami, “A Widening Network,” *Frontline* 19:26 (2002).

11 Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

12 “The 1993 Bombay bombings, say police, were in response to the 1992 destruction of the Ayodhya mosque by Hindu mobs, and to avenge Muslim deaths in the rioting that followed,” in Sajan Kuriokos, “Bombay Bombing: More Religious Strife?” *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 26, 2003.

13 Praveen Swami writes that “with local networks in place, top jihadi commanders were able to operate outside Jammu and Kashmir with ease,” in “A Widening Network,” *Frontline* 19:26 (2002).

14 John F. Burns, “Pakistan Moves Against Groups Named by India,” *New York Times*, December 29, 2001.

15 V.K. Sood and Pravin Sawhney, *Operation Parakram: The War Unfinished* (London: Sage Publications, 2003).

thousand.¹⁶ The sweeping victory of the BJP in the consequent elections signaled that their actions were supported by large segments of the population.

Gujarat has contributed further to Muslim alienation within India.¹⁷ One of India's premier security correspondents wrote, "As a direct consequence, terrorist groups appear to have acquired greater social legitimacy than at any time in the past, even

"Islamist militancy in and against India has its own autonomous logic and infrastructure."

if their influence is still peripheral in the Muslim community"¹⁸ In 2003, bombings hit Mumbai; in 2005 New Delhi; in 2006 Mumbai¹⁹ and Varanasi; and in 2007 Hyderabad and Lucknow.²⁰

Conclusion

This trend has led to growing concerns that al-Qa`ida has become a force in India. There is room for concern as al-Qa`ida leaders have specifically deemed India an enemy of Islam. Moreover, the Islamist groups targeting India have ties through Afghan and Pakistani jihadist networks to al-Qa`ida members. This does not mean, however, that al-Qa`ida has a significant presence in India. The groups that have carried out the major attacks in India have their own resources, organizational structure and social base. They have pursued their agenda since well before 9/11, and will continue doing so regardless of what happens to Usama bin Ladin's organization. Islamist

militancy in and against India has its own autonomous logic and infrastructure.

India's democracy and diversity have helped it weather many storms. The overwhelming majority of its Muslims show no inclination to militancy. India's challenge is to stop further radicalization, while successfully containing militant organizations and their sympathizers. Police forces need to be professionalized so that they are not used solely as political cudgels. India's internal security agencies should be better coordinated to avoid bureaucratic conflicts and oversights. Good intelligence and police work can blunt the ability of organizations with existing networks to do significant damage. Finally, government efforts to integrate Muslims need to stop offering laundry lists of programs and instead focus on a few meaningful and achievable goals. Overcoming Islamist militancy is no easy task, but can be accomplished with a combination of straightforward policies.

For the United States, India's experience is important for several reasons. First, the groups operating in India have links to the rising tide of Islamist militancy within Pakistan. Their ability to grow within India can only increase their power in a dangerously unstable Pakistan. Organizations that can leverage support throughout the subcontinent will be enormously difficult to combat. The ability of Pakistan to control its jihadist fighters and factions is already unclear, and will certainly diminish if an independent Indian base of support develops. Second, India's attempts to maintain a liberal, multiethnic democracy in the face of terrorism can provide valuable lessons and warnings for European countries trying to deal with problems in integrating Muslims. The Indian and European situations differ in many crucial respects, but if India proceeds wisely it can show how to avoid alienating Muslim populations without compromising the crucial attributes of secular democracy. The Indian example may thus prove relevant beyond the borders of South Asia.

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Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

December 15, 2007 (PAKISTAN): Rashid Rauf, the British citizen accused of involvement in the August 2006 plot to blow up 10 passenger jets over the Atlantic Ocean, escaped from police custody in Pakistan. His whereabouts are unknown. – AP, December 15

December 15, 2007 (SOMALIA): Twelve Somali soldiers were injured, and two civilians killed, when a remote-controlled bomb targeting a military truck detonated in Mogadishu. – Reuters, December 15

December 15, 2007 (IRAQ): A member of a U.S.-supported volunteer patrol was killed in the Baghdad neighborhood of Adhamiyya after an individual offered him an explosives-rigged bag that was said to have been found in the street. – AP, December 15

December 16, 2007 (AFGHANISTAN): Two civilians were killed when a roadside bomb exploded in Yaqubi district in eastern Khost Province. Authorities claimed that the Taliban was responsible. – AP, December 16

December 16, 2007 (GLOBAL): Islamist websites posted a statement offering journalists the opportunity to submit interview questions to al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri. The questions are to be posted online at two Islamist websites before a deadline of January 16. – AFP, December 20

December 17, 2007 (IRAQ): Al-Qa`ida Ayman al-Zawahiri released a new video calling on Iraq's Sunni Arab tribes to attack Awakening Councils in the country, calling them "traitors" and "hypocrites" and arguing that "any clan or tribe that defends Islam and crushes traitors...will be remembered in Arab history with pride and glory." Zawahiri also criticized Iran, Hizb Allah, Egypt and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. – AP, December 17

December 17, 2007 (PAKISTAN): Nine Pakistani army recruits were killed in a suicide blast in Kohat, close to Peshawar. – AP, December 17

December 17, 2007 (YEMEN): Yemen's government newspaper 26th of September announced that authorities had arrested two alleged members of al-Qa`ida in Yemen. Some reports stated that the men were members of a cell that was planning a suicide attack in the

16 Sumit Ganguly, "The Crisis of Indian Secularism," *Journal of Democracy* 14:4 (2003): pp. 11-25.

17 Many Muslims remain afraid to return to their pre-riot homes. One example is "In Concentrated Camps," *Outlook*, January 29, 2007.

18 Somini Sengupta, "India Fears Terrorism May Attract Its Muslims," *New York Times*, August 9, 2006. Examples of Muslims feeling alienated by Gujarat and Hindu nationalism can be found in Jill McGivering, "India's Muslims Feel Backlash," BBC, June 6, 2002.

19 On the coordinated train bombings in 2006 in Mumbai, and discussion of other attacks, see "Terror in Mumbai: Call This Peace?" *Economist*, July 12, 2006.

20 A slightly out-of-date chronology of major attacks in India since 9/11 (including in Jammu and Kashmir) can be found through the South Asia Terrorism Portal, available at www.satp.org.

country. – Saba, December 17; *Daily Times*, December 18

December 17, 2007 (IRAQ): Three members of a local Awakening Council were killed in Mafrag, Diyala Province, when gunmen opened fire on them while they were near a vegetable vendor's stall. – CNN, December 17

December 17, 2007 (IRAQ): A truck bomb was detonated as it was parked on a bridge near the Mosul dam in Ninawa Province. Although the facility was damaged, the explosion did not damage the dam itself. According to an engineer, the bomber left his explosives-laden truck near the dam after informing police that the vehicle had broken down and claimed that he was going to find a tow truck. – Reuters, December 17; *Los Angeles Times*, December 18

December 18, 2007 (PHILIPPINES): The Philippine military killed two Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) fighters during a raid on a militant base in Ungkaya Pukan township, in Basilan Province. Authorities claimed that about 40 militants were located at the remote camp, including both ASG and “rogue elements” of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. – AP, December 18

December 18, 2007 (PAKISTAN): A large amount of explosives, in addition to suicide jackets, were discovered inside a Land Cruiser in the Khwazakhela area of Swat, in the North-West Frontier Province. – *Daily Times*, December 19

December 18, 2007 (AFGHANISTAN): Approximately 15 Afghan security guards were ambushed and killed in Bala Buluk district, Farah Province. The guards worked for a U.S. company and were protecting a convoy of fuel tankers at the time of the attack. – BBC, December 18

December 18, 2007 (IRAQ): Sixteen people were killed during a suicide bomb attack at a coffee shop in the predominately Shi'a village of al-Abbura, which is near Ba`quba in Diyala Province. – Reuters, December 18

December 18, 2007 (ISRAEL): Thirteen Palestinian militants were killed by Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip. The attacks targeted Islamic Jihad, and the organization confirmed some of the deaths and threatened to retaliate with suicide bombings inside Israel. – Reuters, December 18

December 18, 2007 (LEBANON): Lebanese authorities charged 31 al-Qa`ida-linked individuals with planning to attack religious

sites—including a church—in the Christian town of Zahleh. The cell, which consisted of Lebanese and Syrians, was allegedly led by a Saudi and a Syrian. – Reuters, December 18

December 18, 2007 (PAKISTAN): Pro-Taliban cleric Faqir Muhammad announced that Pakistani militant leaders have agreed to join forces under the name Tehrik-i-Taliban, or the United Taliban Movement. Faqir Muhammad threatened that if the Pakistani government failed to cease operations in Waziristan and Swat, then the new militant grouping would launch suicide attacks and target government officials. – AP, December 18

December 18, 2007 (FRANCE): Authorities detained eight alleged members of a logistical cell supporting al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The men—six French nationals, a Tunisian and an Algerian—were believed to have provided computer material and equipment to AQIM, but were not planning attacks inside France. Although three of the men were released on December 19, authorities continued to hold the other five. – AFP, December 20

December 19, 2007 (IRAQ): A new study released by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point found that the majority of al-Qa`ida fighters entering Iraq from Syria during a one year period are from Saudi Arabia and Libya. The study, based on 606 personnel records captured from al-Qa`ida in Iraq by coalition troops in October, found that the average age of the fighters from the data set was 24-25; 41% were Saudi, 19% Libyan, 8% Yemeni, 8% Syrian, 7% Algerian and 6% Moroccan. – AP, December 19

December 19, 2007 (PHILIPPINES): Authorities arrested an Egyptian in the southern city of Cotabato, who they allege was planning to detonate a bomb in the city on December 25. The suspect, identified as Mohamad Sayed, was in possession of a 60mm mortar shell and ball bearings, connected to a timer. Although authorities claim that they found Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) literature in Sayed's apartment, it is not yet clear whether the suspect had any actual links to MILF or any other militant group. – AFP, December 19

December 19, 2007 (ISRAEL): A joint IDF-Shin Bet operation resulted in the apprehension of Salim Sayoud, believed to be a top member of Islamic Jihad. Israeli authorities allege that Sayoud was an important actor behind a Tel Aviv nightclub bombing in February 2005 and two suicide bomb attacks at a mall in July and

December 2005. He was arrested near Jenin. – *Jerusalem Post*, December 19

December 20, 2007 (IRAQ): Thirteen Iraqis and one U.S. soldier were killed by a suicide bomber in the town of Kanan in Diyala Province. The attack targeted an Awakening Council. – AFP, December 20

December 21, 2007 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a mosque in Charsadda, located in the North-West Frontier Province, killing at least 50 people. It is believed that the attack was an assassination attempt on former Interior Minister Aftab Khan Sherpao, who is a close ally of President Pervez Musharraf. – AP, December 21; *Los Angeles Times*, December 22

December 21, 2007 (BELGIUM): Authorities arrested 14 individuals on charges of plotting to break convicted terrorist Nizar Trabelsi from jail. Trabelsi was jailed in 2003 for planning to drive a car bomb into a Belgian airbase with the intention of killing U.S. military personnel, 100 of which are stationed at the base. On December 22, however, all 14 of the suspects were released from jail due to lack of evidence. – *Guardian Unlimited*, December 21; AP, December 23

December 23, 2007 (SAUDI ARABIA): The Saudi Arabian Interior Ministry announced that since mid-December authorities had arrested 28 militants linked to al-Qa`ida who were planning attacks inside the kingdom. Of those arrested, 27 were Saudi and one was a foreign resident. The announcement came after another group of arrests on December 21, in which Saudi authorities revealed that they had foiled a terrorist attack during the annual hajj. – Voice of America, December 23

December 23, 2007 (ALGERIA): A bomb targeted an Algerian military convoy near the town of Tebessa, seriously wounding three Algerian soldiers. – Reuters, December 24

December 24, 2007 (MAURITANIA): Four French tourists were shot to death while parked on a roadside near the town of Aleg, 150 miles east of the country's capital, Nouakchott. Militants associated with al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb were suspected of committing the attacks. – AFP, December 29

December 24, 2007 (AFGHANISTAN): Authorities arrested a woman in eastern Afghanistan who was carrying explosives under her burqa. It was not clear whether the woman was preparing for a suicide attack, or if she was transporting the explosives elsewhere. If it were the former, the woman

would have marked the first case of a female suicide bomber in Afghanistan. – Reuters, December 24

December 25, 2007 (IRAQ): Two suicide bombs hit Iraq, one of which occurred in Baiji and left 25 people dead. In that incident, the bomber crashed his vehicle into a truck filled with gas cylinders. The second incident occurred in Ba`quba, when a suicide bomber detonated his payload during a funeral procession, killing four people; Haj Farhan al-Baharzewi, the provincial head of the 1920 Revolution Brigades, was among those killed. – AFP, December 25

December 26, 2007 (PAKISTAN): Militants blew up a checkpoint in Bannu District of the North-West Frontier Province and then proceeded to kidnap 10 policemen. – *Dawn*, December 26

December 26, 2007 (MAURITANIA): Three soldiers were killed near the town of Ghallawiya, which is 430 miles north of the country's capital, Nouakchott. The soldiers, who were manning a checkpoint at a military base, were ambushed by gunmen who arrived in two trucks. Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb claimed responsibility for the attack in an audio recording. – AP, December 27; al-Jazira, December 29

December 27, 2007 (PAKISTAN): Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was assassinated at a rally in Rawalpindi. At least 20 others were killed during the attack, which involved both a gunman and a suicide bomber.

December 27, 2007 (IRAQ): U.S. forces killed in an airstrike Muhammad Khalil Ibrahim, a deputy military leader for al-Qa`ida in Iraq's operations south of Baghdad. According to a U.S. military statement, Ibrahim was a "key planner in numerous attacks against coalition forces operating in the Mahmudiyya area, and was also involved in the facilitation of foreign terrorists and weapons." – CNN, January 4

December 27, 2007 (TUNISIA): Ten men received jail sentences from two to five years for planning to join al-Qa`ida fighters in Iraq. The men were also convicted of attempting to recruit militants to attack international forces in Iraq. – Reuters, December 26

December 27, 2007 (SOMALIA): Militants threw a grenade into a house where a meeting with local elders was taking place, wounding seven people. The attack, which took place in Biyo-Kulule village in Bosasso, occurred in

the semi-autonomous region of Puntland. – SomaliNet, December 28

December 29, 2007 (GLOBAL): A new 56-minute audio statement from Usama bin Ladin appeared on jihadist internet forums, in which the al-Qa`ida leader accused any Muslim cooperating with the Iraqi government as being an apostate. He promised the "liberation of Palestine" and advised Iraq's Sunni Muslims not to attack al-Qa`ida's auxiliaries in Iraq. Bin Ladin also criticized Hizb Allah leader Hassan Nasrallah for allowing the United Nations to station troops in Lebanon following the group's 2006 war with Israel. – news.com.au, December 30

December 30, 2007 (TURKEY): Turkish authorities jailed five alleged members of an al-Qa`ida sleeper cell. The accused were rounded up in a countrywide security sweep the previous day, during which 19 people were detained. One of the five suspects is a high school English teacher from the city of Aksaray. – AP, December 30

December 31, 2007 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber detonated a minibus packed full of explosives at an Awakening Council checkpoint in Tarmiyia, which is 30 miles north of Baghdad. Approximately 12 people were killed in the attack, including nine members of the council and three children. – AP, December 31

December 31, 2007 (THAILAND): Three bombs detonated in the Sunagi Kolok district of Narathiwat Province, injuring at least 27 people. Two of the bombs were rigged into motorcycles parked at hotels and nightspots, while the third exploded inside a discotheque at the Marina Hotel. – Xinhua, December 31

December 31, 2007 (NETHERLANDS): Dutch authorities arrested three men for allegedly planning to execute a terrorist attack on Rotterdam's Erasmus bridge, where approximately 15,000 people were to commemorate the New Year. According to Dutch press sources, two of the men had dual Dutch and Moroccan citizenship, while the other was an illegal immigrant from Sudan. – *De Telegraaf*, January 3

January 1, 2008 (SUDAN): John Granville, an American official working for the U.S. Agency for International Development, was shot and killed, along with his driver, in the residential area of Ryad in western Khartoum. Sudanese authorities deny that Granville was the victim of a terrorist attack and claim that it was an isolated incident. – AFP, January 1

January 1, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber killed approximately 36 men who were attending the funeral of a retired Iraqi Shi'a army officer, who was himself killed in a car bombing on December 28. The January 1 attack took place in Zayouna district in eastern Baghdad. – CNN, January 2

January 2, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber struck a checkpoint manned by members of a local Awakening Council, killing at least four people, including Abu Sadjat, a local tribal chief who had been meeting with U.S. officials shortly before the explosion. The attack took place in Ba`quba. – *Los Angeles Times*, January 3; *New York Times*, January 3

January 2, 2008 (ALGERIA): Four policemen were killed when a suicide car bomber exploded his payload at the doors of a police station in Naciria, which is about 45 miles east of Algiers. A spokesman for al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb, Salah Abou Mohammad, claimed credit for the operation, and said that the truck contained at least 1,100 pounds of explosives. – *International Herald Tribune*, January 2; Reuters, January 2

January 2, 2008 (SOMALIA): A roadside bomb killed three people in the town of Afgoye, which is approximately 30 miles south of Mogadishu. The bomb went off in a crowded market and was possibly intended for Ethiopian troops, yet civilians were the only casualties. – SomaliNet, January 2

January 2, 2008 (SOMALIA): Two Somali government soldiers were killed during clashes with insurgents near Mogadishu's Bakara market. – SomaliNet, January 2

January 3, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber targeted an Indian road construction crew and their Afghan police guards in Nimroz Province, resulting in seven deaths. According to authorities, the construction convoy was first hit by an IED attached to a motorcycle, which halted the convoy. The suicide bomber then moved in on the convoy and detonated his payload, which accounted for the majority of the casualties. – AP, January 3

January 3, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): Authorities apprehended two al-Qa`ida-linked militants, one of whom, Tuwatin Anahalul, was involved in the 2001 kidnapping of three Americans at the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan Province. Anahalul, also known as Abu Basilan, is a sub-leader of Abu Sayyaf Group and a \$48,700 bounty was out for his arrest. – AP, January 4

January 3, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): A grenade was thrown into a nightclub in the southern Philippine city of Cotabato, leaving one dead and five injured. Authorities were unsure as to whether the incident was a terrorist attack. – Deutsche Press Agency, January 4

January 4, 2008 (MOROCCO): Fifty radical Islamists were sentenced for planning to launch a “holy war” in northeast Morocco through bombings and robberies. The group was called Ansar al-Mahdi, and they were apprehended by authorities in 2006. The group and its leader, Hassan Khattab, had managed to recruit members of the Moroccan security services, including police and military. During the hearings, Khattab labeled the Moroccan government as an “apostate dictatorship” and denounced the country’s ties to the United States. – Reuters, January 5

January 4, 2008 (NORTH AFRICA): The famous Dakar Rally was canceled for the first time in its 30-year history due to threats made against the event by al-Qa`ida. The threats came after the December 24 killings of four French tourists near the town of Aleg in Mauritania, and the December 26 killings of three soldiers near the town of Ghallawiya, also in Mauritania. – *The Scotsman*, January 5

January 4, 2008 (GLOBAL): A new internet statement posted by al-Qa`ida’s media wing announced that video messages of the group’s core leaders—Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri—could now be downloaded to cell phones. The posting included a written statement by Zawahiri, in which he encouraged the new effort, stating, “I asked God for the men of jihadi media to spread the message of Islam and monotheism to the world and spread real awareness to the people of the nations.” – AP, January 6

January 5, 2008 (IRAQ): Six people were killed when a roadside bomb destroyed a minibus in Diyala Province. – AP, January 5

January 5, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Authorities arrested an al-Qa`ida operative in Lahore who allegedly was a security coordinator for Usama bin Ladin. The suspect, Amin al-Haq, is a 48-year-old Afghan-born doctor. – UPI, January 7

January 6, 2008 (GLOBAL): In a new 50-minute video posted on the internet, al-Qa`ida’s Adam Gadahn, also known as “Azzam the American,” encouraged Islamist militants to assassinate President George W. Bush during his upcoming trip to the Middle East, where he plans to visit Kuwait, Bahrain,

the West Bank, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Gadahn urges his “militant brothers in Muslim Palestine and the Arab peninsula...to be ready to receive the Crusader slayer Bush in his visit to Muslim Palestine and the Arab peninsula in the beginning of January and to receive him... with bombs and booby-trapped vehicles.” – AP, January 7

January 6, 2008 (IRAQ): Three Christian churches and one monastery were attacked in Mosul. Although there were few casualties, the various churches were damaged. – BBC, January 7

January 6, 2008 (IRAQ): Soldiers and locals who were in the streets to commemorate a national holiday in central Baghdad were targeted by a suicide bomber, leaving nine people dead. – Reuters, January 6

January 7, 2008 (IRAQ): At least three suicide bombings ripped through Iraq, one of which killed Riyadh al-Samaraie, an anti-al-Qa`ida leader of a local Awakening Council in northern Baghdad. Approximately 15 people were killed in the three separate attacks. – CNN, January 7

January 7, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Eight tribal leaders were shot to death in South Waziristan Agency, in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The attacks, which occurred between January 6-7, were believed to be an effort by Islamist militants to prevent negotiations between the tribal leaders and the Pakistani government. – The Canadian Press, January 7

January 7, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber struck a Pakistani army base located in the Swat Valley in the North-West Frontier Province. Three soldiers were wounded. – Deutsche Press Agency, January 7

January 7, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb in Nangarhar Province’s Kot district left two U.S.-led coalition soldiers dead. – AP, January 8

January 7, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber on a motorcycle attacked a police patrol in Kandahar Province’s Spin Boldak district, leaving one policeman dead. – AP, January 8

January 7, 2008 (LEBANON): A new statement by Shakir al-Abassi, the leader of Fatah al-Islam, appeared on Islamist forums. In the statement, al-Abassi said that “this is my first speech after the epic of Nahr

al-Bared,” and he threatened to attack the Lebanese army. The audio recording, which lasted 58 minutes, if authenticated will prove that al-Abassi survived the 15-week Nahr al-Bared battle. – Reuters, January 8

January 8, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani authorities announced the December arrest of Ahsanul Haq, a retired army major linked to al-Qa`ida, who was wanted for a November 1 attack on an air force bus in Sargodha. In addition to Haq, six others involved in the operation were apprehended. – AP, January 8

January 8, 2008 (UNITED STATES): A sentencing hearing opened for Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen who was convicted in August, along with two other conspirators, of aiding al-Qa`ida. Federal prosecutors are pushing for life sentences, while Padilla’s legal team is requesting a maximum sentence of 10 years. – AFP, January 9

January 8, 2008 (IRAQ): Three U.S. soldiers were killed during operations in Salah al-Din Province. – *New York Times*, January 10

January 9, 2008 (ALGERIA): Four soldiers were killed and two wounded when a roadside bomb hit their vehicle in the area around Ait Yahia, which is south of Tizi Ouzou. – AP, January 9

January 9, 2008 (ISRAEL): One member of Islamic Jihad was killed and six others injured while launching a rocket at Israel from the Gaza Strip. Islamic Jihad announced that the group was hit by a surface-to-surface missile, presumably launched by Israeli forces. – AP, January 9

January 9, 2008 (IRAQ): Six U.S. soldiers were killed in Diyala Province after a bomb exploded in a booby-trapped house. The soldiers were engaged in Operation Iron Harvest. – CNN, January 9; AP, January 9

January 10, 2008 (IRAQ): U.S. forces dropped 40,000 pounds of explosives on al-Qa`ida hideouts in southern Baghdad. The airstrikes were part of a larger operation that began on January 8, labeled Phantom Phoenix. – *Guardian Unlimited*, January 10

January 10, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives outside of a court in Lahore, killing at least 23 people. The majority of those killed were police officers. Authorities explained that the bomber blew himself up after being stopped while approaching a police barricade. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. – CNN,

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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.

January 10

January 10, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Members of the Pashtun Wazir tribe announced that they would form a militia to combat al-Qa`ida-linked foreign fighters in regions under their control. A tribal elder told journalists that a militia of 600 people would be organized for the task. – Reuters, January 10

January 10, 2008 (IRAQ): Iraqi National Security Adviser Mowaffaq al-Rubaie told Saudi reporters that his country's security forces have arrested hundreds of suspected al-Qa`ida militants from Saudi Arabia. He also noted that many of the suspects were listed on Saudi Arabia's "wanted" lists, and that the majority had entered Iraq from Syria. – UPI, January 10

January 10, 2008 (SOMALIA): Somali police killed two men suspected of kidnapping foreigners, including the now released French journalist Gwen Le Gouil. The men were killed after police raided a house in Puntland, although some of the gunmen escaped. – AP, January 10

January 10, 2008 (FRANCE): Portuguese aviation authorities intercepted a short-wave radio message threatening terrorist attacks against Paris, including on the Eiffel Tower. The threats, which were not completely clear, were relayed to French authorities who went on a heightened state of alert. – The Canadian Press, January 11

January 10, 2008 (SOMALIA): Shaykh Sharif Shaykh Ahmed, the former head of Somalia's Islamic Courts Union, told reporters that a "part of al-Shabab" militants have withdrawn from his organization, the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS). The shaykh did state, however, that Shaykh Hassan Turki, an al-Shabab commander in the southern Jubba regions, was still part of the ARS. During the interview, Shaykh Ahmed warned the al-Shabab grouping that broke away from the ARS not to denounce Somalis as "non-Muslims." – GaroweOnline, January 11

January 11, 2008 (LEBANON): A Lebanese security source told Deutsche Press Agency that they had taken into custody Mohammed Ndoub, a Syrian national who is allegedly linked to al-Qa`ida and who was possibly involved in the 2006 attempted train bombing plot in Germany. The arrest came after Ndoub called in threats to the German Embassy in Beirut that he would launch attacks on civilian targets in Germany during the next three months. – Deutsche Press Agency, January 11

January 11, 2008 (LEBANON): Lebanese authorities arrested Othman Turkmani, a suspected militant of Fatah al-Islam. Turkmani was detained in the Bab al-Ramel neighborhood of Tripoli. – AFP, January 12

January 11, 2008 (GUINEA-BISSAU): Local authorities in Guinea-Bissau arrested two Mauritians for involvement in the December 24 killings of four French tourists in Mauritania. The suspects allegedly confessed to the attack, and it is believed that they are affiliated with al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb. The two, who were found 400 miles south of the scene of the December 24 attack, were identified as Sidi Ould Sidna and Mohamed Ould Chabarnou, both in their 20s. It is believed that a third suspect involved in the operation fled to Algeria. Three separate suspects believed linked to the December 24 crime were arrested later in the day while trying to photograph French police. – AP, January 11; Reuters, January 12

January 11, 2008 (RUSSIA): Russian authorities believe that between 500-700 militants are still active in the country's North Caucasus region. – RIA Novosti, January 11

January 11, 2008 (EGYPT): Authorities announced the arrest of 11 people, including a Syrian student, for links to terrorist groups in Iraq and Afghanistan. Press reports stated that the Syrian student was planning "to recruit students to send them to Iraq and Afghanistan." – AFP, January 12

January 12, 2008 (ISRAEL): Al-Jazira reported that Egyptian authorities foiled an al-Qa`ida-linked terrorist attack on Israel two months ago. The attack, which included at least 14 operatives, involved an unmanned aircraft/drone to attack targets inside Israel. The cell included Egyptian army officers and engineers. – *Jerusalem Post*, January 13

January 12, 2008 (YEMEN): A new jihadist journal appeared on the web, called the *Echoes of Epics*. The journal included a statement by al-Qa`ida in Yemen in which they vow to free their associates from Yemen's prisons and attack the government. – Reuters, January 13