Al-Qaeda’s Counterintuitive CBRN Terrorism Threat

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Al-Qaeda: The Threat From Tribal Pakistan

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Germany and the Jihadist Threat

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Bin Laden calls for support to Gaza, Jihad

Usama bin Laden, leader of al-Qaeda, urged Muslims to support Palestinians in Gaza amidst the Israeli offensive in an audio message issued on jihadist forums on January 14, 2009. The audio, 22 minutes in length and produced by as-Sahab, the media arm of al-Qaeda, is titled: “An Invitation to Jihad to Stop the Aggression Against Gaza.” It is contained within a video featuring only a still image of bin Laden and al-Aqsa Mosque. In the message, bin Laden urges Muslims to participate in jihad with their selves and their money, arguing that other means to effect change such as demonstrations, conferences, and asking Muslim rulers to allow jihad, are means to “escape” responsibility. He assures: “You are able to defeat the Zionist entity with your peoples’ capabilities and your enormous potential energies, away from support of rulers or even despite the great majorities among them standing in the camp of the Zio-Crusader alliance.” Bin Laden also addresses the current global financial crisis and seeks financial support for the mujahideen.

Zawahiri Blames Obama, Mubarak for Gaza Offensive

Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, the second-in-command of al-Qaeda, criticizes Barack Obama and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak for culpability in the Israeli offensive in Gaza in an audio speech issued on jihadist forums on January 6, 2008. The speech, titled, “Massacre of Gaza and Siege of the traitors,” is 10 minutes and 18 seconds in length, produced by as-Sahab. Graphics on the video show a baby receiving medical treatment and Zawahiri sitting with a rifle on his lap. Zawahiri argues that the offensive launched by Israel in Gaza is “Obama’s gift” prior to his taking office, and a “link in the chain” of the “Crusade” against Islam and Muslims. Egypt’s actions at the Gaza border, sealing the crossings, Zawahiri states, are meant to imperil Palestinians in collaboration with Israel.

Al-Qaeda Issues German-Language Video, Threatens Germany

As-Sahab, the media production company of al-Qaeda, issued a 30-minute video message in German with Arabic subtitles to jihadist forums on January 17, 2009. The message, titled “Germany’s Rescue Plan,” is narrated by an individual calling himself Abu Talha al-Alamani (Abu Talha the German) and is dated October 2008. The video begins with shots of Abu Talha holding an RPG. In a statement clearly directed to the German people, Abu Talha argues that the “global economic crisis has crushed the pride of the Germans,” and that any rescue plan in Germany will be useless so long as Germany continues to have soldiers deployed in Afghanistan, which he notes is the third largest military presence in the country, after the United States and Britain. He threatens that Germany will not enjoy any security, and notes, “Detonating myself in the path of Allah is my desire since 1993.” He also criticizes the German media for republishing the inflammatory cartoons of depicting the Prophet Muhammad originally published by the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten in September 2005 and other acts that offend Muslims.

Two Former Guantanamo Detainees Appear in al-Qaeda Video

Two former detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Abu Sufyan al-Azdi al-Shahri (Prisoner No. 372) and Abu al-Hareth Muhammad al-Oufi (Prisoner No. 333), appear in a video from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula that was issued on jihadist forums on January 23, 2009. The video, titled “We Start from Here, and in al-Aqsa We Meet,” is 19 minutes long and features speeches from four leaders in al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula: Leader Abu Basar al-Wahayshi, Deputy Leader Abu Sufyan al-Azdi al-Shahri (AKA Saeed Ali-Shahri), Abu Hureira Qasm al-Rimi (AKA Abu Hureira al-Sana’ani), and field commander Abu al-Hareth Muhammad al-Oufi. Each leader addresses the Israeli offensive in Gaza, in addition to other issues, and urge for jihad and all means of support for Gaza.

Belarus, Ukraine Cautioned Against Aiding NATO

The Jihad Media Battalion cautions Belarus and Ukraine against opening their lands for NATO supply routes to Afghanistan in a message posted on jihadist forums on January 11, 2009. They argue that such an action will expose their lands to attacks by the Taliban and al-Qaeda, and ask: “Is such a ‘purely commercial transaction’ worth sacrificing the lives and security of the people of these countries?” The group applies the same argument to Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, and questions if these countries are able to bear strikes by the mujahideen.

Firdaws Admin Slain in Afghanistan

An administrator of two jihadist networks was announced slain in Afghanistan in a message posted on jihadist forums on January 14, 2009. This individual, “Khattab al-Thaiq,” an administrator of the now-inactive al-Firdaws jihadist forum and Ansar chatroom on Paltalk, was noted in July 2008 to have departed for jihad in Afghanistan. The user who posted that announcement did not indicate when Khattab left, but stated he “reached his brothers.” The message declaring his death indicates he died during Ramadan, which would correspond to September 2008. A brief biography

Al-Qaeda Urges Gaza Repressals in Western, Arab Capitals

Abu Yahya al-Libi, a Shariah Committee official within al-Qaeda, urges mujahideen to launch reprisals in Western and Arab capitals as punishment for death and destruction in Gaza. His call comes in a 31-minute, 31-second video speech entitled, “Palestine… Now the Fighting is Fierce,” that was issued by as-Sahab on jihadist forums on January 22, 2009. Libi directly threatens Britain, blaming the Balfour Declaration for Palestinian suffering. Alleviating the suffering of Palestinians will not come through protest or demonstrations, Libi states, but through physical action against the enemy. He also refers to the Mumbai attacks that resulted in over 170 deaths and 300 injuries to Indian civilians and police and foreign nationals, citing its perpetrators as examples for Muslims.
informs that he was from North Africa, less than 25 years old, and sought for some time to migrate for jihad.

Jihadists Suggest Attack on UN Official in Gaza

Reacting to reports that UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon will visit Gaza on January 20, 2009, jihadists posted messages to forums suggesting that the mujahideen in Gaza “receive” him with a suicide bombing or other attack. These jihadists recall the attack by the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) in Baghdad during Ban Ki-moon’s visit to Iraq in March 2007, and say he consulted a psychologist due to the incident. One forum participant argues that an attack may not happen due to the leaders of nationalist militant factions in Gaza. He writes: “May they listen. May Allah guide them. They did nothing, not even when Bush visited Palestine, even though they have missiles and considerable equipment… The solution: As the Commander of the Faithful Abu Omar al-Baghdadi said, all ardent men of al-Qassam have to turn the tables on those leaders.”

GIMF Open Meeting with “Asad al-Jihad 2”

“Asad al-Jihad 2” commented in detail on the recent Israeli offensive in Gaza in his first part of responses to a Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF) initiative. GIMF invited jihadist forum members on January 9, 2009 to ask questions of “Asad al-Jihad 2” related to Gaza. The first part of answers to these questions was issued on jihadist forums on January 13, 2009. The user, “Asad al-Jihad 2,” is a prominent member of the jihadist Internet community whose thoughts and observations are often posted under the GIMF banner. He argues in his responses that one cause for the Gaza offensive is to weaken Hamas and subjugate them beneath Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority, thus removing the threat of resistance. He also writes at length concerning Martin Indyk, former US ambassador to Israel and founder of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Indyk, he argues, is the “engineer of the war on Gaza.” In response to Indyk writing in the Financial Times that the Middle East “needs” Obama, “Asad al-Jihad 2” writes: “No, we do not need the slave of the house, but rather you are the ones who need us in order for you to keep your interests before you lose them forever. And the news is what you see not what you hear.”

Jihadists Network Video Glorifies Bali Bombers

Jihadi Network Video Glorifies Bali Bombers

Al-Fallujah Media Foundation, the media division of al-Fallujah (faloja) jihadist forum, glorifies the Bali bombers in a video issued on the network on January 5, 2008. The video is titled, “Surely They Were Youth Who Believed in Their Lord.” Footage of Amrozi Nurhasyim, Ali Ghuroon Nurhasyim, and Imam Samudra, three individuals convicted and executed for their roles in the 2002 Bali bombings, is shown alongside previously released clips of al-Qaeda leaders Usama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. The segments of speeches featured in these clips seek to justify the actions taken by the Bali bombers and incite others to follow their path.

Taliban Advises Guantanamo Closure is Insufficient Change

The Taliban advises US President Barack Obama that the closure of Guantanamo Bay detention center is a “positive step” towards peace and stability, but is insufficient to change the effect of former president Bush’s “satanic” policies in the region and world. This message was posted on jihadist forums on January 27, 2009. They argue that the closure of Guantanamo may have been caused by the facility’s inability to keep the “faithful mujahideen” from pursuing jihad, thus questioning Obama’s motivation. The Taliban repeats its call to Obama to withdraw American forces from Afghanistan and Iraq, and advises he cease defending Israel against Islamic interests in the Middle East and elsewhere. They add: “Therefore it is imperative that Obama, before he gets hit with the same fate as the Communist empire, must find potential ways to carry a message of peace and stability to the world. Through this, he can also protect his people and administration from the danger of elimination and decline.”

Jihadists Support Gazans

The Israeli action targeting Hamas in Gaza caused a bevy of jihadist groups to issue statements of support throughout the month of January for the people of Gaza in particular, and Palestinians in general. Those groups included al-Qaeda, AQIM, Ansar al-Islam, IAI, ISI, IJU, GIMF, and Hezbollah, as well as Commander Muhammad (AKA Abu Anas), the Commander of the Eastern Front in Chechnya and Deputy Commander of military forces in the Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus, and Abu Qatada al-Filistini (the Palestinian), a jihadist ideologue imprisoned in England.

Al-Yaqeen Analyzes Mumbai Attacks

Al-Yaqeen Media Center, a jihadist media group, issued a report containing its analysis of the Mumbai attacks on jihadist forums on January 6, 2009. The report is 24 pages, double-column, and shows on the cover Barack Obama and the Taj Mahal hotel burning and billowing smoke. Al-Yaqeen observes the event from the perspective of its execution, objectives, and results, and refers to it as the “second September 11th.” The group argues that the executors, be they Deccan Mujahideen or another group, demonstrated the weakness of India and delivered unto it economic and political blows, and impacted other countries in the region, such as Pakistan. Moreover, due to its success, the attacks “convince many of the possibility of inflicting great harm on the Hindus through a small number of fighters.”
Will terrorists go Nuclear? was the title of a seminal 1975 paper and now of the forthcoming book, both written by Brian Michael Jenkins, one of the most influential figures in the field of terrorism studies. It is a question that has been asked too infrequently in recent years. Indeed, the entire issue of WMD, or more accurately, CBRN terrorism, seems of late to have been completely overshadowed by our preoccupation with post-invasion Iraq, the success of the surge and the conviction that we “are fighting them there, so that we don’t have to fight them here.” The issue, though, requires continued focus and unceasing vigilance - and not only for the most obvious reason.

Motive And Intent Are Clear; The Actual Capability (Hopefully Still) Remains Elusives

The most obvious reason, of course, is the famous so-called “one percent doctrine” credited to Vice President Dick Cheney. It was Cheney who, in the dark days following the September 11, 2001 attacks, reportedly stated that, “If there’s a one percent chance that Pakistani scientists are helping al-Qaeda build or develop a nuclear weapon, we have to treat it as a certainty in terms of our response.” This view, it is said, has since determined US planning and assumptions regarding the need to act immediately and decisively to any possible terrorist use of WMD.

That al-Qaeda has long held an active interest in all four categories of CBRN weaponry is beyond doubt. Usama bin Laden’s efforts to acquire a nuclear weapon are believed to have begun with a proclamation titled “The Nuclear Bomb of Islam” under the imprimatur of the “International Islamic Front for Fighting the Jews and Crusaders.” It is this often-cited statement in which bin Laden first publicly declared his belief that “it is the duty of Muslims to prepare as much force as possible to terrorize the enemies of God.” He confirmed his edict a few months later in an interview with a Pakistani journalist. When asked whether al-Qaeda was “in a position to develop chemical weapons and try to purchase nuclear material for weapons?” bin Laden replied, “In answer, I would say that acquiring weapons for the defense of Muslims is a religious duty.”

It was, of course, al-Qaeda’s alleged development of chemical warfare agents for use against US forces in Saudi Arabia that the Clinton Administration cited to justify the controversial August 1998 American cruise missile strike on the al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, Sudan. The movement appears to have commenced a biological warfare research and development program a year later. A memo found on a computer used by Ayman al-Zawahiri, following the US-led invasion of Afghanistan, revealed that on 15 April 1999 al-Qaeda’s Tactics and Targets (Alexandria, VA: Tempest Publishing, 2003), p. 52.

1 Weapons of mass destruction.
2 Chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear.

he instructed Muhammad Aref, then-deputy commander of al-Qaeda's military committee, to initiate work on biological weapons. Citing articles published in Science, the Journal of Immunology, and the New England Journal of Medicine, as well as information gleaned from books such as Tomorrow's Weapons (1964), Peace or Pestilence (1949), and Chemical Warfare (1924), Zawahiri outlined his thoughts for Aref on the appeals of bio-terrorism:

*a* The enemy started thinking about these weapons before WWI. Despite their extreme danger, we only became aware of them when the enemy drew our attention to them by repeatedly expressing concerns that they can be produced simply with easily available materials . . . .

*b* The destructive power of these weapons is no less than that of nuclear weapons.

*c* A germ attack is often detected days after it occurs, which raises the number of victims.

*d* Defense against such weapons is very difficult, particularly if large quantities are used . . . .

I would like to emphasize what we previously discussed — that looking for a specialist is the fastest, safest, and cheapest way [to embark on a biological- and chemical-weapons program].

Additionally, al-Qaeda's nuclear weapons efforts had continued in earnest, at least as of September 2001. According to Harvard professor Graham Allison, bin Laden hosted two Pakistani nuclear scientists — Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood and Abdul Majed — on the eve of the September 11, 2001 attacks at a secret al-Qaeda facility near Kabul, Afghanistan. Although their discussions reportedly addressed chemical as well as biological weapons development, Mahmood claimed that bin Laden was especially interested in nuclear weapons.

Further evidence of the seriousness of bin Laden's nuclear ambitions was subsequently uncovered in January 2002 when CNN reporters found a 25-page document in a Kabul office used by al-Qaeda that contained designs for a nuclear device.

Limited Attack Using an Unconventional Weapon

Throughout history, terrorists by their nature and intention have sought to use violence for its psychological effects — that is, the intense fear and anxiety that their attacks, and the threat of still further attacks, create. Terrorists have also long sought to undermine public confidence in the ability of their government and the authorities to protect them and thereby engender a climate of doubt, paranoia, and demand for precipitous action that the terrorists both hope to exploit and manipulate to their favor. The intention to elicit and then capitalize on emotive, counterproductive societal and governmental responses is a well-established principle of the terrorist mindset and strategy. Within the past few years, compelling empirical evidence has emerged that al-Qaeda has also concluded that limited, even discrete, chemical, radiological, or biological attacks — which do not necessarily kill or have to kill and harm a large number of persons — can arguably achieve precisely these same desired effects, but without having to resort to the employment of some WMD.

Two separate plots that were uncovered and de-railed in the United Kingdom in 2003 and 2004 involving, respectively, the limited use of a biological and a radiological weapon, underscore how terrorists today may be pursuing such capabilities more for their potentially disruptive psychological impacts on society than for their lethal potential.

The first incident involves the so-called “ricin plot” orchestrated by a 31-year-old al-Qaeda operative named Kamel Bourgass. An Algerian national, Bourgass was reportedly trained by a 31-year-old al-Qaeda operative named Kamel Bourgass. An Algerian national, Bourgass was reported to have been trained by an influential Saudi cleric, Sheikh Nasir bin Mahid al-Fahd, to attack the US with a nuclear bomb.

However, while our concerns must, of course, be concentrated on preventing, pre-empting and deterring nightmare scenarios involving terrorist use of such weapons of mass destruction, attention must also be paid to the threat of mass disruption, rather than mass destruction or mass casualties, that might also employ chemical, biological, or radiological weapons. In other words, although the threat of WMD terrorism cannot ever be prudently discounted, the most likely terrorist CBRN attack in the near future (e.g., the next five years) will involve the use some unconventional weapon (e.g., a chemical, radiological, or biological weapon), perhaps combined with a conventional attack means (e.g., a truck bomb), that is employed less for its killing potential than for the searing psychological effect the terrorists hope to achieve on the nation it attacks and the attendant de-stabilizing repercussions on the targeted society that they hope such an attack will produce.

**The Potentially Corrosive Psychological Impact of a Limited Attack Using an Unconventional Weapon**

At the same time, it must be emphasized that al Qaeda’s ambitions to obtain and use WMD are both well known and well documented. Certainly, the range of ambitious efforts undertaken by the movement in Afghanistan until “Operation Enduring Freedom” are testament to al Qaeda’s unendibably serious efforts to develop and/or acquire chemical, radiological, biological and nuclear weapons.

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9 Allison, Nuclear Terrorism, pp. 20–23.
prior to the September 11, 2001 attacks at al-Qaeda’s bio-weapons facility in Derunta, near the Afghan city of Jalalabad. In June 2004 he was convicted of the murder of a British police officer and the following April of “conspiracy to commit a public nuisance by the use of poisons, and/or explosives.” According to police documents and testimony at his second trial, Bourgass plotted to target businessmen and holidaymakers using the Heathrow Express, the train that travels throughout the day between Heathrow Airport and London’s Paddington Station. Maps of its route were found in the home of one of Bourgass’s co-conspirators. Their plan was to surreptitiously paint or swab door handles on the train with ricin in hopes of poisoning the victims when they touched the substance with the fingers and palms of their hand. Significantly, their objective, the prosecution argued, was not necessarily to kill as much as to “cause mayhem and widespread panic.” Although the ricin might not have killed anyone, a British Home Office official elaborated, “it would still have been regarded as a major terror coup” to carry out an attack with such a weapon. This was also the conclusion reached by Peter Clarke, then Deputy Assistant Commissioner at Scotland Yard and the head of the police anti-terrorist branch. “It is clear had Bourgass been allowed to continue his plot undetected,” he noted, “some people would have been made very ill and quite possibly have died. [Nevertheless] It would have been hard to underestimate the fear and disruption this plot could have caused across the country.”

The conviction in November 2006 of Dhiren Barot (also known as Issa al-Hindi or Issa al-Britani), an al-Qaeda operative who planned to use a radioactive “dirty bomb” in Britain as part of a series of attacks on both public gathering places and key economic targets in both that country and US, further underscored the potential consequences of non-conventional weapons.

In sum, today’s jihadist terrorists not only seem to be thinking in terms of non-conventional weapons but also appear to fully appreciate the potentially corrosive and unsettling psychological impact that such attacks can have on society - even if such weapons fail to kill or physically harm large numbers of persons. Prominent in their calculations is the assumption that attacks with these weapons can substantially enhance the fear and intimidation that terrorism, by definition, seeks to produce in a targeted society. Doubtless present in their calculations, too, are the potential effects that such non-conventional weapons could have in undermining public confidence and trust in the ability of the government and authorities to prevent and protect society against such attacks. “This was a hugely serious plot,” Peter Clarke noted, “because what it had the potential to do was to cause real panic, fear, disruption and possibly even death to the public.”

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14 Bourgass, however, was admittedly acquitted of charges of conspiracy to commit murder using ricin—as were his four indicted co-conspirators from the London apartment. Ibid. See also, Ben English, “Plot to poison London,” Herald Sun (Victoria, Australia), 15 April 2005; and, Man admits UK-US terror bomb plot, 12 October 2006 http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6044.


16 Southern, “Terror plot man had Wood Green Base,” 15 April 2006. In fact, although ricin is a highly toxic substance if inhaled, ingested or absorbed through the skin; the latter means is largely ineffective since the agent’s molecules are in fact too large to be easily absorbed through the skin from ordinary tactile contact. Thus as lethal as ricin is, it is a more difficult weapon with which to kill or injure than is commonly assumed.

17 Quoted in Roddy Asworth, “Ricin gang targeted Heathrow Express,” The Express on Sunday, 17 April 2005.

When US-led coalition forces intervened in Afghanistan, the numerical strength of al-Qaeda numbered about 3,000. Today, the center of gravity of al-Qaeda and other foreign fighters has shifted from Afghanistan to tribal Pakistan. Nonetheless, the number of foreign fighters in tribal Pakistan has dramatically decreased both due to Pakistani military operations and US drone attacks.

Today, a group of about 90 hardcore members led by Usama bin Laden and his deputy and designated successor Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri are spearheading the fight against the US, its allies and its friends. In addition to working with both tribal and mainland Pakistani groups, they coordinate with about 900 foreign fighters in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA). Among the Tajiks, Uighurs, Turks, and foreign fighters of other nationalities, approximately 350 are Uzbek.

The foreign fighters work with about 15,000 Afghan and Pakistani insurgents on both sides of the border. Approximately 60% of these fighters are from tribal Pakistan. The tribal belt separating Afghanistan from mainland Pakistan has become the strategic epicenter sustaining the fight in the region and beyond.

The Context

Terrorism, guerrilla warfare and insurgency have emerged as the pre-eminent national security threat to most countries in the early 21st century. The threat is spreading from conflict zones to neighboring regions and countries far away. Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan are among the best known case studies. The spectrum of threat groups includes both Muslim and non-Muslim groups, but al-Qaeda presents the most formidable threat.

Afghanistan, a conflict of international neglect after Soviet withdrawal, emerged as the epicenter of terrorism until US-led coalition intervention. Since then, the ground zero of international terrorism has shifted from Afghanistan to Pakistan’s tribal region. Many of the major terrorist attacks attempted or conducted in the West after 9-11 have been organized, directed or inspired by al-Qaeda’s senior leadership located in this rugged and inaccessible mountainous region. Three profound developments characterize the post 9-11 global threat.

First, after the US-led intervention in Afghanistan, the ground zero of terrorism has moved from Afghanistan to the FATA. Today, FATA is the single most important base of operations -- a place where leaders, trainers and planners are all located.

Second, after the US invasion and occupation of Iraq, al-Qaeda relocated to FATA and gained a foot-hold in the Middle East establishing a forward operational base 2290 km (1420 miles) closer to the West. From FATA, al-Qaeda directed the global battle in Iraq and elsewhere.

Third, by investing in sustained communication and propaganda from FATA, al-Qaeda co-opted several like-minded groups in Asia and the Middle East. In place of one single al-Qaeda, there are several al-Quedas – Tawhid Wal Jihad became al-Qaeda in Iraq, the Salafist Group for Call and Combat became al-Qaeda Organization of the Islamic Maghreb, and al-Jemmah al-Islamiyah’s Noordin Mohomed Top Faction became al-Qaeda Organization of the Malay Archipelago.

The long term strategic significance of al-Qaeda successfully carving out a semi-safe-haven in FATA is yet to be realized. In addition to the inaccessible Afghan-Pakistan border emerging as the new headquarters of the global jihad movement, al-Qaeda and its like-minded groups are seeking to change the geopolitics of the region. Using FATA, al-Qaeda, its associated groups and self-radicalized homegrown cells have recruited globally and struck al-Qaeda’s enemies both through its operational network and inspired and instigated cells. Operating from FATA, groups trained in that region are mounting attacks in Western China (Xinjiang), North India (Kashmir), Iraq, Algeria, Somalia, and other conflict zones. As the assassinations and assassination attempts on leaders both in Pakistan and Afghanistan show, the philosophy of al-Qaeda and its associated groups is to put in place leaders that are not hostile to the terrorists and the extremists. The subject of al-Qaeda dominates the international media, but until the London bombings in July 2005, its active presence in FATA was not a subject of intense international debate.

Tribal Pakistan

Located along the 1,520-mile-long rugged border separating Afghanistan and Pakistan, the isolated region is known as...
the FATA. A 450km by 250km area of 27,220 square kms, FATA is comprised of seven agencies - Bajaur, Momand, Khyber, Orakzai, Kurram, and North and South Waziristan. While the population of FATA is 3.1 million, its adjacent NWFP has a population of 175 million.

FATA has always been ruled through political agents. The Pukhtunwali, or the Pukhtun code, governed the way of life. The code included Hujra, the Centre of Pukhtun society, Jirga, a council formed to settle conflicts, Malamstia, regulates host/guest relations, and Da khazoo dranaway, respect for females. Furthermore, they adhered to Jaba, promise, Nanawatee, to seek mercy, Panah, to give shelter, Nang, to honor, Badal, revenge, and Swara, a female given to affect compromise.

These traditions and customs were affected by the steadfast Islamization of FATA in the 1980s and 1990s. The emergence of the Afghan Taliban, Mullah’s first sovereign state, gave rise to like-minded forces in FATA. There was the resurgence of politico-religious parties and their militant wings. The number of madaris including those preaching hatred grew. Nonetheless, an admirable security situation prevailed in FATA despite decades of conflict in neighbouring Afghanistan and limited economic development.

To maintain control, Pakistan traditionally deployed five military and paramilitary organizations in FATA.

Frontier Corps: on the Afghan border
Frontier Constabulary: between FATA and settled areas
Police: settled areas
Levies: in parts of FATA
Khassadars: deployed in FATA; irregular, based on inheritance

Threat Displacement

After al-Qaeda was dislodged from Tora Bora in Afghanistan in early 2002, the group retreated to FATA. After relocating to Waziristan, both al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban linked up with the Pakistan Taliban and other Pakistani mainland groups. These two entities survived by reaching out to FATA’s politico-religious parties, their host. Thereafter, al-Qaeda used its historical affiliations and nurtured and built a clerical support base.

Al-Qaeda’s deputy leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, moved to Waziristan and stayed there during part of 2002 and eventually moved to Bajaur Agency. As his wife and two children were killed during US attacks in Afghanistan, al-Zawahiri married a woman from the Mahmund tribe in Bajaur Agency. Similar to the manner in which Osama bin Laden had married a woman from Yemen to strengthen his ties to the Yemeni tribes, al-Zawahiri’s marriage enabled the deputy leader of al-Qaeda to develop strong tribal ties to the leadership of Tehrik Nifaz Shariat Muhammadi (TNSM) in Bajaur Agency. Maulana Faqir Muhammad, also from the Mahmund tribe, represented TNSM in Bajaur Agency. Similarly al-Zawahiri built a relationship with Liaquat Hussein who ran the Ziaul Uloom Taleemul Quran seminary in Chingai in Bajaur until his death in October 2006. Through these contacts al-Zawahiri was able to avoid arrest and reconstitute a scattered al-Qaeda in disarray.

After the influx of both foreign fighters in 2002, the situation in FATA began to change. Immediately after al-Qaeda and its associates retreated from Afghanistan to FATA, they began to plan attacks against coalition forces in Afghanistan. They were initially supported by multiple Pakistani groups that later formed TTP. In addition to Afghan Taliban, Hezb-e-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatiyar and the Haqqani network also joined them. As the local Pakistani groups grew in strength, the Pakistani military responded, spawning an insurgency. As the Pakistani military had difficulties of mounting land operations to neutralize al-Qaeda and its associates in FATA, the US conducted about 60 drone attacks from June 2004 until January 2009. The first drone attack by the US killed Nek Muhammad and two of his associates in Wana, North Waziristan on June 18, 2004. Nonetheless,
the Pakistan government stated that the attack was mounted by the Pakistani security forces.  

Nek Muhammad was replaced by Abdullah Mehsud, a former detainee at Guantanamo Bay, as the most significant leader in FATA. After his death on July 24, 2007, Baitullah Mehsud emerged as the most prominent leader in FATA. Under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud, both Afghanistan and Pakistan experienced unprecedented levels of violence. Furthermore, al-Qaeda has become more assertive, often using the Pakistani Taliban as its strike arm.

With the emergence of local militias in their support, Pakistan deployed its regular military in FATA. Since then, Pakistan is facing an insurgency in FATA. In many ways, FATA drifted away from the state of Pakistan. Pukhtunwali, a system that governed the day to day lives of the people in FATA, was shattered to pieces. Furthermore, faith in religion dwindled. In the name of Islam, un-Islamic acts were carried out by foreign fighters.

**Threat Complexion**

Almost all the terrorist and extremist groups that existed in Afghanistan under Taliban rule have reconstituted themselves and maintain a robust presence in FATA. Al-Qaeda is providing the crucial knowledge and methodology to mobilize not only the foreign but the domestic terrorist groups. Traditionally, the tribes in FATA supported the anti-Soviet multinational Afghan mujahideen campaign (December 1979-February 1989).

After US-led coalition intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, the tribes in FATA perceive Western intervention in Afghanistan as an extension of the past where non-Muslims occupied Muslim land. Henceforth, the hardline Pashtu nationalists and the Islamists are supporting the fight against the US, their allies and friends. Like Sudan from 1991-1996 and Afghanistan from 1996-2001 for the jihadists, FATA has emerged as the most important terrorist sanctuary in recent history.

Second, FATA has become a sanctuary for research and development in explosives, training and directing operations globally. This included the attacks against not only Afghanistan and mainland Pakistan but the Middle East and the West. As long as FATA remains a sanctuary, the incessant attacks against coalition forces in Afghanistan will not stop. Furthermore, the spate of attacks on mainland Pakistan will continue. This included the multiple assassination attempts on Pervez Musharraf and the successful assassination of Benazir Bhutto. Attacks in the UK and several other operations disrupted in the West, such as the liquid explosives plot, were planned in FATA. Rashid Rauf, the mastermind of the foiled liquid explosives plot in August 2006 to blow up airplanes traveling over the Atlantic Ocean, escaped during his appearance in a Pakistani court. Later he was killed along with an al-Qaeda leader, Abu Zubair al-Masri, in a predator drone strike in the Mirali area of the North Waziristan Agency on November 22, 2008.

Third, al-Qaeda is working together with like-minded groups and has invested in sustained propaganda to radicalize the Muslim masses. Even in migrant communities, al-Qaeda has unleashed a homegrown threat. In 2007 and 2008, al-Qaeda produced videos at an increasing rate. The aim of al-Qaeda is to politicize, radicalize and mobilize Muslims worldwide into supporting and participating in the fight against the West. In the absence of a robust government response to counter al-Qaeda’s message, Muslims are susceptible to extremist propaganda. Heightened extremism leads to support and participation in terrorism.

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12 Zulf Khan Afridi and Azka Jameel, Operation in Wana: Wanted al-Qaeda ally Killed, Pakistan Times, June 19, 2004


Despite intermittent pressure, al-Qaeda and many other foreign and Pakistani militant groups have re-established a smaller and more rudimentary version of their Afghan training infrastructure in the Shakai Valley of South Waziristan. Operating out of FATA and the neighboring settled areas, the NWFP, al-Qaeda trained over 100 Westerners of Pakistani heritage to mount attacks in Europe and North America. For example, the leader of the 7/7 bombers Mohamed Siddique Khan and the leader of the failed 7/21 attacks were both trained in NWFP. Furthermore, the al-Qaeda leader in the UK Dhiren Barot, alias Abu Issa al-Brittani, visited Waziristan to consult the al-Qaeda leadership when planning to attack multiple targets in the UK and the US, including the Prudential building, New York Stock Exchange and Citigroup’s headquarters in New York, as well as the International Monetary Fund’s headquarters in Washington D.C.

Impact on FATA and Neighborhood

The population of FATA has suffered more than any other region of Pakistan. After al-Qaeda and its erstwhile host Afghan Taliban linked up with like-minded Pakistani groups and leaders, FATA emerged as a zone of sustained violence. The tribal belt has witnessed an unprecedented scale of violence and new tactics, including suicide bombings, attacking jirgas, killing women, beheadings, attacking mosques, funeral prayers, mutilating dead bodies, and target killing of rallying points/icons.

Seeking to exercise their control, Pakistani groups influenced by the ideology of al-Qaeda have killed over 600 tribal elders, or Maliks, as seen in the chart on the top right.

Despite an increase in military and law enforcement personnel, the wave of crime continued to increase. It has spilled over from FATA to Settled Areas, Provincially Administered Tribal Areas, Frontier Regions and to De Facto Tribal Areas. The rise of violence and the spill over of violence from 2007 to 2008 indicates a trend into 2009.

While the number of military personnel killed exceeded 2,000 since the beginning of the insurgency, the number of law enforcement personnel being killed continued to rise steadfastly. After the Lal Majid tragedy in July 2007, both violence and the support for violence in FATA and the adjacent areas grew significantly.

Today, FATA is suffering from a double flight, both capital and brain drain to other parts of the country and overseas. The insecurity has caused economic activity to come to a near standstill. With utilities and other infrastructure destroyed, development funds are being diverted to law enforcement activities. The educational system has suffered gravely affecting the future of the region.

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16 The London Bombings, Briefing by the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), UK, July 2006
17 The London Bombings, Briefing by the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), UK, July 2006
18 Terrorist Threat in FATA/NWFP, Briefing by Intelligence Bureau, Pakistan, January 2009.
19 Terrorist Threat in FATA/NWFP, Briefing by Intelligence Bureau, Pakistan, January 2009.
Swat alone, over 200 schools have been destroyed and female education banned by the Taliban.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{Al-Qaeda, the most hunted terrorist group in the world, has created another Terrorist Threat in FATA/NWFP, Briefing by Intelligence Bureau, Pakistan, January 2009.}

\textbf{FEATURED MANUAL: ELECTRONIC WARFARE GUIDE}

Electronic warfare and its varied means of conduct by the enemy militaries is the subject of a 114-page guide posted on December 30, 2008, on the military sub-forum of Shmoukh al-Islam, a jihadist network. The guide is posted by a user calling himself “Abu Safyah,” who in the past year has posted explosives manuals and methods to facilitate detonations of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). “Abu Safyah” presents electronic warfare as the “fourth dimension” amongst modern military means - air, ground, and naval systems - and also leading system studied by scientific and technical research centers. He indicates that information provided in the electronic warfare guide is compiled from military websites. As such, it offers highly technical information about varied means of electronic warfare, but does not provide how jihadists may use these systems themselves. It is for knowledge only, which may then be utilized for defense against electronic warfare systems.

The manual is divided into two sections, the first of which tracks the birth and development of electronic warfare, and the second, covering modern control systems, their means and their development.

The first section includes: electronic counter measures (ECM), electronic jamming, radar jamming, sonar jamming, electromagnetic pulses, wiretapping, and computer viruses.

The second section includes: mechanical command and wireless control, secure telecommunications, satellites for precise targeting, thermal and infrared imaging systems, and laser and thermal guiding systems.

Today, the violence in Afghanistan has surpassed the violence in Iraq. Afghanistan witnessed a 33% rise in attacks in 2008.\textsuperscript{21} In addition to its existing contingent 36,000 troops, American leaders in Washington plans to send in another 30,000 troops to Afghanistan in 2009.\textsuperscript{22} Despite the increase of coalition forces in Afghanistan, the terrorist threat will persist in Afghanistan. The answer to stability in Afghanistan rests in clearing the terrorist enclave on the Afghan-Pakistan border. FATA remains the epicenter of global terrorism, where multiple al-Qaeda-led and al-Qaeda-driven threat groups plan, prepare and execute attacks globally.

Unless and until the international community recognizes and assists Islamabad in dismantling al-Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban infrastructure in tribal Pakistan, the threat to the world will continue. With the influx of Pakistani fighters from mainland Pakistan to tribal Pakistan, the proportion of attacks in Afghanistan by the Pakistani Taliban will increase.

Since al-Qaeda relocated to tribal Pakistan, it has transformed from an operational group to both a training organization and an ideological movement. Al-Qaeda’s ability to influence local Muslim groups in Pakistan and globally, particularly in Iraq, has been profound. Today, more Muslim threat groups are adopting al-Qaeda’s methodology of suicide attacks and ideology of global jihad. Using vehicle and human-borne suicide bombers, terrorist groups in Asia, Africa and the Middle East are mounting spectacular attacks against high-profile, symbolic and iconic targets in urban cities.

\textsuperscript{21} Sayed Salahuddin, “Afghanistan Says Foreign Fighters Coming from Iraq,” Reuters, February 4, 2009

\textsuperscript{22} Karen de Young, Afghan Conflict Will Be Reviewed: Obama Sees Troops As Buying Time, Not Turning Tide, Washington Post, January 13, 2009
One of al-Qaeda’s earliest digital pioneers who lived in California and helped recruit Adam Gadahn, al-Qaeda’s prominent American spokesman, was profiled in a digital “book of martyrs” released by the group in January, 2008, celebrating the martyrdom of 120 mujahideen killed in Afghanistan. Khalil bin Saeed al-Deek, also known as Abu ‘Aa’id al-Filistini, received an encomium from al-Qaeda, who praised him in this book of martyrs for his dedication to jihad and the assistance he provided to the terrorist group.

Al-Deek, who had close ties to al-Qaeda leader Abu Zubaydah, is perhaps most famous for digitizing the Encyclopedia of Jihad, a now widely distributed terrorist training manual produced by al-Qaeda, and providing this manual to Raed Hijazi, one of the operatives involved in the Millennium plot to destroy targets in Jordan in early 2000. Al-Deek was rumored to have been killed in Pakistan in 2005, but his profile in the book of martyrs is the first acknowledgment of his death by al-Qaeda and serves as public confirmation from the group itself that al-Deek was indeed a member of the terror group.

A Palestinian raised in Jordan, al-Deek eventually traveled to the United States in the early 1980s, where he briefly attended aviation school, according to his biography in the book of martyrs. According to the book of martyrs, he later “gave up aviation and devoted himself to computer engineering. Only a few years later, he became a skilled computer engineer.” Al-Qaeda would later avail itself of al-Deek’s computer skills to help the group digitize its Encyclopedia of Jihad as well as distribute al-Qaeda’s propaganda.

While in the United States, al-Deek met Abdullah Azzam, the peripatetic jihadist Sheikh who recruited many all over the world to jihad and served as a mentor to Usama bin Laden. Like many others, Azzam’s rhetoric and charisma transfixed al-Deek, who subsequently “accompanied him in his comings and goings to the mosques of America, inciting and preaching.” Al-Deek then traveled to Afghanistan, “where he trained and prepared. He attacked and fought on the fields of jihad.”

With the war in Bosnia raging in the early 1990s, al-Deek, as stated in the book of martyrs, left Afghanistan and “packed his cases and made for that land, its people oppressed, in defense of its innocent honors which were terrorized by the Serb infidels.” The book also notes that he did not remain long in Bosnia before returning to Afghanistan, where he “started a new period of killing and fighting.” After a favorite commander of his was killed, al-Deek then returned to the United States, residing in Anaheim.

Al-Deek built a network of operatives around him in California to assist al-Qaeda, being a valuable asset to the group because of his familiarity with the United States and computer skills. Indeed, the book of martyrs notes that al-Deek used “his mastery of computer science in calling and preaching [and] spreading military sciences via the Internet.” By 1997, al-Deek had created one of the first jihadist websites at www.badr.com. The website
contained jihadist ideology and rhetoric and remained online through mid-2001.

Also a benefit to al-Qaeda, al-Deek was a naturalized US citizen who had even legally changed his name to the American-sounding “Joseph Adams”. Among those whom he helped recruit while in the United States was a teenage Adam Gadahn, who would later become al-Qaeda’s English-speaking spokesman. By 1997, al-Deek was participating in a money-laundering scheme to raise funds for al-Qaeda. Operating a sham non-profit in California called “Charity without Borders,” al-Deek and his cell were able to obtain tens of thousands of dollars from the state of California ostensibly to promote the recycling of motor oil. The names of both Adam Gadahn and al-Deek, as Joseph Adams, appear in likely falsified timesheets required to be submitted to the state to verify the charity’s putative activities.

He then left the United States for Pakistan in the late 1990s, where “on the hills of Peshawar, he got married to a Syrian lady, among the people of uprightness and piety, who shared his bitter march.” Utilizing his computer skills, al-Deek was tasked with digitizing the Encyclopedia of Jihad, a manual of thousands of pages educating jihadists on everything from how to make bombs to providing first aid, which al-Deek put on CD-ROM. He also, according to the book of martyrs, “undertook another great effort, in which Allah preserved the heritage of the martyr Imam Abdullah Azzam. He downloaded [Azzam’s] recorded speeches, put them on computer discs, and disseminated them.”

In 1999, Raed Hijazi and Khadr Abu Hoshar, plotters of the Millennium attacks to occur in Jordan in 2000, contacted al-Deek and received a copy of the Encyclopedia of Jihad on a CD-ROM. Al-Deek and Abu Hoshar further assisted Hijazi in traveling to Afghanistan to receive military training in preparation for the attacks. However, before the Millennium plot could be carried out, Jordanian authorities arrested many members of the cell, disrupting the attack. With several of the plotters in custody, the Jordanians managed to locate and arrest al-Deek in Peshawar, Pakistan, in January, 2000.

After being taken into custody in Pakistan, al-Deek was extradited to Jordan and was, as stated in the book, “delivered to the kingdom of evil Jordan where he received in Zionist-Crusader prisons what only Allah knows...” While in prison, authorities determined that al-Deek had shared a bank account in Peshawar with Abu Zubaydah, the al-Qaeda lieutenant captured by the United States in 2002 who was the mastermind behind the Millennium plot.

Timesheets from Charity without Borders, the sham charity run by al-Deek. Al-Deek appears on the sheet as his legally changed name “Joseph Adams.” Future al-Qaeda spokesman Adam Gadahn’s name also appears.

As a result of his imprisonment, the book of martyrs noted that “his soul could not bear staying under the whip of humiliation, amongst the sections of cells. Therefore, he went on a hunger strike.” Al-Deek’s hunger strike notwithstanding, the Jordanians eventually released him in May, 2001, due to a lack of evidence. After his release, the book of martyrs recounts that al-Deek “then settled, after many countries refused to receive him, in Lebanon, where he resumed his bloody solitary journey.”

Leaving Jordan, al-Deek was reportedly denied entry to Dubai before traveling to Beirut. After his stopover in Lebanon, al-Deek went again to Peshawar. After residing in Peshawar for several months, “the Pakistani intelligence men knocked on the door of his house and asked him to check-in with the American embassy. There in its departments of evil, he was informed that the Israeli Mossad wanted to meet him.”

2 Ibid.
As often appears in the trope of jihadist stories, the book of martyrs asserts that al-Deek had a dream vision warning him that his visit to the embassy was dangerous and he was being hunted by intelligence agencies. He therefore, “packed his cases, and escaped with his faith, heading to the battlefields of those garrisoned there around Kabul.”

Fellow mujahideen in Afghanistan praised al-Deek for his intelligence, military prowess, and devotion to God. One jihadi in the book of martyrs, Uthman al-Shahri, stated that al-Deek “loved military training. He was one of the best brothers in computer science. He memorized many parts of the book of Allah. He had extensive ideas and promising prospects [and was] skillful in use of artillery.”

After 9/11, al-Deek remained in Kandahar and fought coalition troops. The book of martyrs recalls, “Only a few weeks after that evident conquest [9/11], the Roman armies came with their horses and knights. Their planes spread fire and terror on earth. The children of tawhid [monotheism] stood up to defend the great Islam. Our martyr [al-Deek] participated with them in that honor. He often spent lengthy nights garrisoned on the gates of Kandahar with the remaining migrant groups...Fifty days of patience and sacrifice, blood, and body parts, [and] Kandahar lost its keys.”

Following the fall of the Taliban in Kandahar, al-Deek fled to the Shah-i-Kot valley in Paktia province. “From there,” the book of martyrs states, “he continued the march of toil and sacrifice and landed in the midst of the Pashtun tribes who, with open arms, welcomed the coming of the children of the companions and the grandchildren of Muhammad.” Undiscouraged, the book notes, “the lion marched in his electric path, undeterred by difficulties. Rather, he became even more active in his preaching, inciting, and preparing.”

The book of martyrs asserts in hyperbolic fashion that al-Deek’s intense support to the jihad became intolerable to the United States, who began the orchestration of his death through the Pakistani government. The book maintains, “The American intelligence became aware of that activity. It could only delegate its tails in Pakistan to get rid of this towering mountain.”

In April 2005, al-Deek’s wife reportedly told one of his brothers that al-Deek had been killed. No details surrounding his death have been publicly reported, save for the description of his death in the book of martyrs. The book alleges that that Pakistani intelligence recruited a “traitor agent” who was under al-Deek’s command for several months. This agent invited al-Deek to lunch and “in a moment of distraction, that coward pulled [al-Deek’s] weapon and fired the bullets of his malice and treason into the body of his guest.” The book laments that “there, under the ceiling of that sad house, the knight of Palestine parted. He courageously dismounted his horse after he performed his duty in this life.”

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The appearance in an al-Qaeda video of Bekkay Harrach (AKA Abu Talha the German) speaking fluent German and possessing knowledge of the German social and political fabric brought to the forefront the preexisting jihadist threat to Germany. His video, released concurrently with a Taliban suicide bombing outside the German embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, on January 17, 2009, was celebrated on jihadist forums. Indeed, virtual jihadist groups, such as the Global Islamic Media Front and the Jihadist Brigades to Invade the Internet, launched a campaign for its distribution to German internet forums and German citizens via e-mail and Facebook groups. The video is the first produced in the German-language by al-Qaeda’s media arm, as-Sahab; however it is not the only propaganda piece by a jihadist group threatening Germany or its interests abroad. By virtue of it being a Western state, compounded with its republication of the Danish cartoons insulting the Prophet Muhammad and its military presence in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, Germany is considered a prime target by the jihadist community.

**Republication of Cartoons**

In July 2006, two men of Lebanese descent, Jihad Hamad and Yusef Mohammed al-Hajj Dib, placed suitcases containing homemade explosives on two trains in Cologne, Germany.¹ The devices, however, failed to explode. Six men, including Hamad and Dib, were arrested as suspects in the bomb plot, which, according to Hamad, was motivated by the publication in Germany of cartoons insulting the Prophet Muhammad and its military presence in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, Germany is considered a prime target by the jihadist community.

Of the suspects, Saddam al-Hajj Dib, was reportedly killed in May 2007 amidst clashes in the Nahr al-Bared camp near Tripoli, Lebanon between Fatah al-Islam and the Lebanese military.²

Outrage amongst Muslims towards the cartoons was most palpable within the jihadist community, including al-Qaeda and militant leaders and members of jihadist forums. The publication and republication of the cartoons was viewed as an act of defiance against Islam, a demonstration of disrespect to Muslims and their sanctities. For example, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the second-in-command of al-Qaeda, called for reprisals in the face of the republication in a speech released March 4, 2006, four months prior to the attempted train bombings in Germany. In the speech, al-Zawahiri stated:

“They have directed insults to the Prophet and have purposefully continued in this and refused to apologize… It is insufficient to merely go and join some protests and burn a few embassies and then return home to our normal lives… But facing their insults requires a real defense that will thwart the Crusader campaign against Islam in all ways. This requires that we ask ourselves a dangerous question: Are we ready to sacrifice ourselves and what we own in the name of Allah?... If we are ready to sacrifice ourselves and what we own, then we must seek jihad against this criminal Crusader campaign that targets our creed, land, and resources.”

The issue persists three years later, as Bekkay Harrach, allegedly a former German resident now operating with al-Qaeda in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, referenced the cartoon publications in his videotaped speech, produced in October 2008. Harrach, using the alias “Abu Talha the German,” noted the publishing of the cartoons by Der Spiegel, Die Welt, and ZDF, as a campaign “waged intentionally and deliberately to test the readiness of the Muslims.”

Another jihadist group, the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), also referenced the cartoons in its video released on April 15, 2008, which contains footage of a suicide bombing carried out by a Turkish fighter from Germany, Cuneyt Ciftci (AKA Sa’ad Abu Furqan). IJU, which is active in Afghanistan and Pakistan, says in the video’s introduction: “This film is revenge upon those who insulted the Messenger, peace and prayers of Allah be upon him. We say to the brothers of monkeys and pigs, just wait, just wait, we will come to your homeland.”
Military Presence in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan

The threat to launch strikes on enemy soil, evidenced by the German train plot in July 2006, materialized again in September 2007 when three IJU members were arrested by German intelligence over a plot to strike multiple targets in Germany. These targets included Frankfurt International airport, US military installations such as Ramstein Air Base, and bars and nightclubs. Two of the men, Fritz Martin Gelewitz and Daniel Martin Schneider, both German converts to Islam from Christianity, are reported by German investigators to have trained in a Pakistani camp operated by IJU. IJU released a statement on September 11, 2007 indicating the strikes were to be implemented at the end of 2007, hitting Uzbek targets as well. In this message, the group stated:

“With these operations, our purpose was to clearly express that we are against the oppression by the United States and Uzbekistan, two countries who are leading the cruelty against Islam and Muslims, and it would have been a warning to remove the German air base that is located in Termez, Uzbekistan, from Uzbekistan…. If the infidels do not decide to make peace and do not stop their slaughter of Muslims, we feel obligated to protect ourselves and our Muslim brothers, and to retaliate for the murder they have committed.”

IJU, through a German fighter in its ranks, has also directed threats at Germany over its presence in Muslim countries. Eric Breininger (AKA “Abdul Gaffar the German”) commented in an IJU interview, released on a Turkish jihadist website on May 23, 2008, that Germany should expect attacks organized by Islamic organizations. He also cites the military base in Termez, Uzbekistan, adding:

“I believe that the German people will take the right decision and will thereby avoid unnecessary problems. The Germans have a new hope for the return of security, sleep, shopping, and peace of mind without continuous fear that the bearded foreigner or Germany may be a bomb. The entire solution is in your hands alone.

“If the Germans do not follow this path, then they will have passed judgment on themselves. If the democratic order commits the minority to accepting laws legislated by the parliament, such as the laws on health and taxes, so, too, must the minority suffer the consequences of the hostility of the majority. This is a democratic principle.”

Harrach addresses his words to the German people, aiming to create popular pressure on the German government to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, especially in the Germany federal election in September 2009, stating:

“Germany, with its 3,500 soldiers, is the third largest military presence in Afghanistan. The British, as the second largest military presence, had the first taste, and if the Germans think naively and lightly – which I do not expect – that they, as the third largest forces, will be left alone, then the presence of Germany politicians in the Bundestag is misplaced.”

The alleged encroachment on Muslim sovereignty, as cited by IJU in the September 2007 statement, and German participation in the war in Afghanistan have been stated repeatedly to be the primary contributing factors for jihadist actions and rhetoric aimed at Germany. Al-Qaeda leaders, including Usama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and leaders from the Taliban and IJU, have repeat-
“[Germany] is helping Americans by permitting them to build a base in the country. Americans are using these bases to fight against the Muslims. As long as this continues, Germany and all other occupying countries should expect operations organized by Muslims. Whoever wants the war, will get it.”

Breininger first appeared in an IJU video released on April 28, 2008, speaking in German and encouraging Muslims in Germany to participate in and support jihad. His next appearance came on October 21, 2008, in a video titled, “An Appeal from the Hindukush,” in which he denies media reports that he is inside Germany planning attacks. Such reports, he explains, are used to spread panic amongst Germans, while the real danger comes from the presence of German soldiers in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. Abdul Gaffar declares that war is proclaimed against every country aligned with the United States against Muslims, adding: “The German people must turn to their own government if they wish to continue and be spared of Muslim attacks in Germany.”

Hannelore and Sinan Krause, Arrows of Righteousness September 2007

Other jihadist groups also direct messages to the German government and its people to affect withdrawal, some taking measures such as capturing Germans as a means of pressure. For example, a group in Iraq calling itself the “Arrows of Righteousness,” released three videos between March and September 2007 threatening to kill a German mother and son, Hannelore Marianne Krause and Sinan Krause, unless German forces were pulled out of Afghanistan. In the second video, released on April 2, Hannelore Krause speaks in German, pleading to the German people and her family to secure the release of her and her son, stating:

“Germany was safe before it allied with America in this devilish alliance against what is called terrorism. What terrorism is this? Did the Afghan people attack Berlin and destroy its factories? Did any Muslim explode on bomb in Germany? Do our politicians want us to be victims of the way of which we have nothing to do? All of us will pay the price for this through our economy and through our security. And I will be the first victim if you don’t agree to the demands of these men [in the Arrows of Righteousness].”

Hannelore was ultimately released in July 2007, but the fate of Sinan is unknown.

The Taliban in Afghanistan has also used hostage-taking as a means to pressure the German government. On July 18, 2007, the Taliban captured two German engineers, Rudolf Blechschmidt and Ruediger Biedrich, in Wardak province and threatened to kill them unless Berlin heeded its demands, which included the withdrawal of German forces from Afghanistan. Three days later, the group announced in a statement posted to a jihadist website that as their conditions were not met and the prisoners were executed. Their claim would later be found spurious; Blechschmidt was released on October 10, 2007 after Germany paid a ransom and the Afghan government released four prisoners.4

The Taliban has also directed messages to German citizens, warning that their government’s refusal to withdraw German soldiers from Afghanistan will warrant more attacks against these soldiers. In the 32nd issue of its electronic magazine al-Samoud, released on jihadist forums on February 3, 2009, the Taliban addressed a message to Germans in an article titled, “A Message to the German People and to its Rulers Who Side with the Americans.” In it, the Taliban states that German leaders, Chancellor Angela Merkel in particular, stand with American soldiers in their alleged assault on Afghans civilians. They argue that the suicide bombing against the Germany embassy in Kabul on January 17, 2009 was a means to punish German rulers for their ignorance of the Afghan plight, stating:

“This martyrdom-seeking operation was a clear message to the German people to punish their rulers who side with the Americans. [These rulers] abused the trust given to them by the German voters, and they preferred the interests of foreigners over the interests of Germans. Also, it is a message warning those rulers ignorant to the painful Afghan situation.”

Another group, a virtual jihadist media organization known as the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF), also addressed messages to Germany through its German-offshoot, threatening attacks if Germany does not withdraw its forces from Afghanistan. The first of these videos was released March 10, 2007 and also

addressed Austria. Though the GIMF does not claim to have a military arm, it works with groups that do operate on the ground, such as the Army of Islam [Jeish al-Islam] in Gaza and the Shabaab al-Mujahideen (Young Mujahideen Movement) in Somalia, and distributes media extensively to indoctrinate and incite Muslims. In the message, GIMF warns:

“O German government, Germany is a strong economic country, and until recently, it was a safe land. Why do you want to lose all of this Bush and his gang?... With your assistance and limitless support for America, terrorist calls are motivate to attack you. Thus, you destroy your security by your own hands. This is our advice to you: Remove your soldiers from the Muslim lands and take back your support for Bush and his people, because this is surely in your interest.”

A second video from the German GIMF was released on November 21, 2007, also addressing both Germany and Austria. To Germany, the group reiterates its demand for withdrawal, stating:

“The German soldiers remain still in Afghanistan and we repeat against the call of the last video, that Germany must remove its troops from Afghanistan, which serves your own security in your country. The same applies to Austria, also. The mujahideen have spared you so far, as the number of your dead soldiers is not particularly high, but this will soon be otherwise, as the Taliban has announced a winter offensive and this offensive stretches to the north [of Afghanistan].”

Calls to German Muslims

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), a jihadist group active in Central Asia that has carried out attacks in Afghanistan, has produced propaganda aimed at German Muslims, encouraging them to migrate to Afghanistan for jihad. Such participation would apparently include military training that also threatens the German state. Several individuals speaking in German appear in an IMU video posted to jihadist forums on January 10, 2009 produced sometime in September 2008. The video, titled “A Joyous Message from Afghanistan,” boasts of the success of the mujahideen in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and like other jihadist productions, portrays jihad as a duty incumbent upon Muslims. One of the mujahideen appearing in the video, identified as “Abu Abdul-lah from Germany,” sits amongst children, two of whom carry rifles, and urges German Muslims to come and practice jihad with their entire family. He says: “Dear brothers from Germany, as you can see, this has become a family-friendly place. Bring your wives and children along with you; there is place to live far from the front. There are hospitals, pharmacies, and schools.”

Another of the mujahideen in the video, identified as “Abu Adam from Germany,” makes a similar exhortation, stating:

“My dear Ummah in Germany, you who are glad with Allah as your Lord: You have been obligated to fight. Fighting is destined for you. And Allah knows best… But perhaps something is holding you back, even though this is good for you… Don’t you want to be in Allah’s favor? Don’t you want Him to forgive your sins?... Brothers, don’t you know? What is the problem with this transaction? What bothers you with this business exchange?”

Since 2006, there has been an increase in the tempo in which jihadists have targeted Germany with actions and threats. The threats from al-Qaeda and IJU highlight an existing threat not only to German soldiers stationed in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, was also to the German state. Indeed, individuals like Bekkay Harrach, who states during his speech that “detonating myself in the path of Allah is my desire since 1993,” whose appearance could be inconspicuous in Germany, may represent a greater danger to Germany than that of the Taliban, which has not expressed a desire to launch attacks outside Afghanistan. After the release of Harrach’s video, as-Sahab released a German-subtitled version of its video documenting the suicide bomber who struck the Danish embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan on June 2, 2009. That video, originally released on September 4, 2008, declared the suicide bombing to be an act of revenge for the Danish cartoons insulting the Prophet Muhammad. Its distribution, in tandem with the distribution of Harrach’s video, exacerbates the jihadist threat to Germany.
The role of women in jihad is a topic which has been fiercely debated among the jihadist community for many years. The Qur’an is not completely clear regarding the female’s role in jihad, leaving much room for interpretation and questions, like: Should women remain on the sidelines caring for the wounded or engage in direct combat against the infidels? Are they allowed to carry out suicide operations or should they stay home and raise their children to be Islamic militants?

While all of these questions are of concern to those looking to participate in jihad, both male and female, there is no consensus on the role of women in jihad in the Islamic community. However, there are two broad categories which can be used to characterize the ideas of Islamic terrorist groups regarding the role of women in jihad: a supporting role versus an active role.1 Due to the varying views on a woman’s place in jihad, this report will explore the beliefs of the major Islamic terrorist groups of the 21st century, their opinions on the role of women in jihad, and the Islamic community’s response to their judgments.

Support for Women in Jihad

There are a handful of Islamic terrorist groups which support the idea of women playing an active role in jihad. One of these groups is the terrorist organization known as HAMAS, which was founded in 1987 and is active in Palestine. HAMAS clearly states its position that it is acceptable for women to actively participate in jihad in Article 12 of its charter:

“Resisting and quelling the enemy becomes the individual duty of every Muslim, male or female. A woman can go out to fight the enemy without her husband’s permission, and so does the slave: without his master’s permission.”

-Abu Musab al-Zarqawi

According to an article by the Associated Press, “At least 11 Palestinian women have launched suicide attacks in recent years.”2 Huda Naim, a women’s leader and HAMAS member, states that many women in Palestine want to become active in jihad. She claims that “A lot of the girls I speak to...want to carry weapons.”3 Naim also maintains the belief that women have the right to participate in jihad.

Another organization which allows women an active role in jihad is the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), a jihadist group active in Afghanistan and Pakistan. While its leaders have not issued an official statement on the female’s position in jihad, it is clear, from what its members say, that active jihad for women is permissible. This is exemplified when a writer, identified as a female mujahid in Afghanistan, encourages Muslim women to participate in jihad 4

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1 For the purposes of this report a female who plays a “supporting” role in jihad is one who raises her children to be “good” Muslims, supports her husband in his jihad, and cares for the wounded. A woman who takes an “active” role in jihad is one who fires weapons, fight in battle, and carries out suicide operations.


4 Ibid.
in a Turkish-language jihadist forum to which she posted on September 15, 2008. The message bears the banner of the IJU and contains six images of female mujahideen standing in an open field and holding firearms.

The writer of this message, “Ummu Muhammad”, argues that women do indeed have a role in jihad, despite detractors saying otherwise. In particular, the writer suggests that women take more of a supporting role, and only refers to direct combat through citing the example of Muslim women in the time of the Prophet Muhammad. However, the post does feature pictures of females holding firearms, implying that active jihad is permissible. Also, washing and tailoring the clothes of male mujahideen, and preparing their food are examples of explicitly suggested support. She adds:

“There is nothing you lose here. Don’t think that you cannot leave your mother, father, sisters behind. Isn’t the love of Allah, His religion and His will more important than your family?”

She also emphasizes that life “here,” --presumably in Afghanistan since that is where she claims to be writing from-- is not hard. Ummu Muhammad recognizes that there is some hardship in life, but claims there is the hope to earn Paradise. Clearly, Muslim women have some of the same motives as Muslim men for doing jihad, namely to be able to attain Paradise.

While there are a few Islamic terrorist organizations which allow women to play an active role in jihad, there are others that believe women should be more supportive than active. Even within a group, there can be disagreements as to the role of women in jihad. Al-Qaeda is one of these groups. It began as an organization composed of a small number of core members, but over time it has become a global organization with hundreds of members and numerous branches, including al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, al-Qaeda in Iraq, and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. In the past few years there has been a great deal of debate among the leaders of the different branches of al-Qaeda regarding the place of women in jihad.

One of the first times an al-Qaeda leader formally addressed the jihadi community on the role of women in jihad was three years ago. On July 5, 2005, a one-hour audio message by the al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, titled: “Does the Religion Wane While I Am Still Alive” was released. Zarqawi touched on numerous subjects in the message, mentioning the desecration of the Qur’an by the Americans, denouncing the Iraqi army, and in a unique step, calling upon the Muslim women in Iraq and elsewhere to take an active role in jihad. This was the first time Zarqawi called upon Muslim women to join jihad and he also indicated the important role the woman plays in jihad: to encourage their “husbands and sons to fight jihad against the crusaders and converters,” as well as raising children who strive for jihad and sacrifice their life:

The jihadi woman is the woman who raises her children to join the jihad and to fight and die for jihad.”

From this statement it is clear that Zarqawi believes that women should take a more active role in jihad, whether it involves raising children or dying for jihad. In addition, Zarqawi describes women who had written to him requesting to carry out suicide operations against the enemy, saying he was impressed by their letters:

“I was weeping over the situation of the nation, telling myself that not enough men are volunteering for operations, which made a woman ask for the honor…”

Since 2005, when Zarqawi’s audio message was released, the number of female suicide bombers in Iraq has increased nearly every year, as seen in the graph entitled “Women bombers on the rise.”

In fact, on November 9, 2005 in Amman, Jordan, there were three suicide attacks on Western hotels: the Radisson Hotel, the Grand Hyatt Hotel, and the

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6 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
Days Inn, which killed dozens of people.\textsuperscript{13} Three men, one at each hotel, detonated their suicide belts almost simultaneously. However, the attack on the Radisson Hotel involved a female suicide bomber as well. Sajida Mubarak al-Rishawi, a 35-year-old Iraqi woman, and her Iraqi husband, Ali Hussein al-Shumari, 35, attempted to carry out a suicide attack on a wedding celebration which was being held in one of the ballrooms at the Radison. Al-Rishawi’s husband detonated his suicide belt, but when al-Rishawi tried to detonate hers, it did not go off. Jordan’s deputy prime minister, Marwan Muashar, said that Ms. Rishawi is the sister of Mubarak Attous al-Rishawi, a top aide to Zarqawi.\textsuperscript{14} Al-Rishawi recounted all of these events in her taped confession, where she wore the explosive belt packed with ball bearings that she unsuccessfully tried to detonate.\textsuperscript{15}

The day after the attacks, on November 10, 2005, al-Qaeda in Iraq issued a statement claiming responsibility for the suicide bombings in Amman, Jordan, targeting “some hotels which the Jordanian devils made as a garden for Allah’s enemies.”\textsuperscript{16} This was one of the first prominent suicide bombings carried out by Zarqawi’s al-Qaeda in Iraq in which a woman was actively involved. The attack came in November 2005, a mere four months after Zarqawi’s message calling for women to take a more active role in jihad.

**Zawahiri’s View**

While Zarqawi advocated for women’s active role in jihad, the number two leader of al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri disagrees. On December 16, 2007, an initiative was announced for members of the jihadist Internet community and media organizations to submit questions, “friendly or hostile,” to Zawahiri.\textsuperscript{17} For a period of one month, as-Sahab, al-Qaeda’s media production company, in coordination with al-Fajr Center, collected questions from the four primary al-Qaeda-affiliated forums, and then submitted them unaltered to Zawahiri for him to answer as many as possible in a production sometime in the future. Due to the volume of the number of questions, the responses were given in two sets. Answers to the first groups of questions were released on April 2, 2008 and the second and final installment of his responses were issued to jihadist forums on April 21, 2008.\textsuperscript{18} Among these questions were inquiries regarding the role of women in jihad, which were addressed in the second set of responses.

One jihadi forum member who participated in the open interview, a woman using the screen name Ghruba, posed the following question to Zawahiri:

“Does al-Qaeda accept women in its ranks?”

Zawahiri unambiguously states that there is no role for women in al-Qaeda, replying,

*My answer to sister Ghruba is no.*\textsuperscript{19}

When asked if women may travel to the Islamic State of Afghanistan alone, he states that “My answer to Hafidat Ibrahim: there must be a Mehrem [male chaperone] and a trusted guide.” Another individual, who uses the screen name Thaqeb, also posted some questions about women, asking:

*Who is the highest ranking woman in al-Qaeda? Don’t mention names if you do not want to do so, but what is their duty in the organization?”*

Zawahiri’s response to this question shows his belief that women should play a domestic role in jihad. He boldly states:

*“Al-Qaeda has no women, but the women of the mujahideen do their heroic part in taking care of their homes and sons in the roughness of the immigration, movement, unity, and expecting the Crusader strikes.”*

Female jihadist forum members on Arabic and Western forums reacted to his statement with dismay, writing that his answer was “not what we had hoped” and reporting stories of would-be female jihadists distraught at the news that al-Qaeda does not want them.\textsuperscript{20}

Discussions of women’s role in jihad reignited a few months later on July 12, \textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{16} SITE Intelligence Group, "Jihadist Forum Members Submit Questions for Dr. Ayman Al-Zawahiri in Initiative for Open Dialogue by As-Sahab Foundation and Al-Fajr Center,” December 20, 2007. SITE Intelligence Group, "Second Part of Responses by Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri to Open Meeting Coordinated by al-Fajr Center and as-Sahab,” April 30, 2008.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{20} SITE Intelligence Group, “Jihadist Comments in Regard to Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri and No Women in al-Qaeda,” April 30, 2008.
2008 following news that a female suicide bomber had carried out a suicide attack on June 22, 2008, killing 15 outside a courthouse in Baquba, the capital of Iraq’s Diyala Governorate. Jihadist forum members used this attack to highlight the role of female suicide bombers in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Palestinian Territories. On the al-Ekhlaas Arabic-language jihadist forum, members took the bombing as an opportunity to reexamine the role of women in jihad and particularly their role as suicide bombers. Forum members quoted Qur’anic precedent for female fighters, noting stories of women who fought with Muhammad and defended themselves during the early days of Islam. However, other members noted that warfare had changed and while carrying out jihad is obligatory for men, it is not a binding requirement for women.

The discussion on the role of women in jihad continued on al-Ekhlaas through July 21, 2008. Amidst arguments, one of the members reminds of Ayman al-Zawahiri denying the existence of women within al-Qaeda, and explaining that women of the mujahideen have a domestic role. A female jihadist criticizes that Zawahiri’s words do not equate to women’s jihad as illegitimate, and states:

“I repeat to you that she whose heart is burning for her faith and goes out in a suicide operation seeking Allah, will not be deterred by the words of a thousand of your like.”

However, the reactions to Zawahiri’s statement on women in jihad were not confined to Arabic-language forums. Members of the French-language Al Mourabitoune forum also debated the role of women in jihad after member Al Qassam created a new thread by posting a New York Times article describing the June 22nd attack. The article was followed by a response from member Oum ‘Amar, who questioned the female jihadist’s affiliation to al-Qaeda because of the organization’s declared belief that a woman is to stay at home. She asked:

“Did al-Qaeda claim responsibility for this operation? I ask because I just reread an article that takes a sick pleasure in showing, based on the statements of Sheikh Az-Zawahiri, that once again ‘The role of women is to stay at home; even al-Qaeda does not want them.’”

Al Qassam responded that, while he has never seen the Islamic State of Iraq claim responsibility for the martyrdom of a woman, al-Qaeda in fact encourages women to promote jihad indirectly by “raising the next generation of Mujahideens.” He goes on even further to state that the unique Iraqi context challenges traditional beliefs about the woman’s role:

“A woman in Iraq for example, because of the security situation, attracts less attention than a brother sitting alone in a vehicle at a checkpoint. It is surely for this reason that they assist in operations of this genre that we speak of in Iraq, something that I have never heard of in Afghanistan, for example.”

There was an undeniably abrasive backlash amongst the female jihadist community in response to Zawahiri’s statements. Women were very disappointed because what al-Zawahiri said is not what’s happening today in the Middle East, especially in Iraq or in Palestinian groups. Many women were upset and felt that it was their right to play an active role in jihad. Despite Zawahiri’s statement that women do not have a role in al-Qaeda, there have still been numerous suicide bombings carried out by women in Iraq since his statement was issued.

Following Zawahiri’s comments on the role of women in jihad and the reactions of the female jihadist community, Dr. Hani al-Sibai, a London-based jihadist ideologue, published a message in July 2008 in regards to a female suicide brigade within al-Qaeda in Iraq, and the presence of female suicide bombers in general. Sibai’s writing was posted on the website of the Maqreze Center for Historical Studies, an organization which he heads, on July 28, 2008. It was then posted on July 30 on al-Ekhlaas and al-Hesbah, two password-protected al-Qaeda-affiliated forums, by a Maqreze Center representative. Sibai’s writing on the female brigade was prompted by a query...

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25 Ibid.
26 SITE Intelligence Group, “Jihadist Ideologue on Female Suicide Bombers in al-Qaeda,” August 1, 2008.
from a journalist in Egypt, asking for his analysis of the “new phenomenon” of female suicide bombers in Iraq, and if this is a new method of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Sibai clarifies that al-Qaeda in Iraq operates within the Islamic State of Iraq, and ISI does not employ female suicide bombers. Sibai even goes as far as to claim that,

“Henceforth, I do not think there exists a women’s organization that is affiliated with al-Qaeda Organization in Iraq, as claimed by the media.”

The idea that ISI, or al-Qaeda, would use female suicide bombers is determined by Sibai to be an attempt by the enemy to show that these organizations failed to recruit men for these operations. Men, he states, are the “vertebral column and the striking force” in al-Qaeda’s clash with those who occupy Muslim lands.

However, Sibai does not dismiss the role of women in jihad or suicide operations, though he claims that behind every female suicide bomber is a male relative. The numbers and activities of female suicide bombers in particular countries and groups, Islamic and non-Islamic, he argues, are due to the lack of tight Shariah controls.

Despite the statements of Zawahiri and Sibai, there have been a number of attacks carried out by females of al-Qaeda in Iraq. More than 30 women have blown themselves up in 2008, according to Iraqi security officials. But there is hope that the number of attacks may decrease, especially since October 7, 2008 when Iraqi forces arrested a woman “suspected of heading up the recruitment of female suicide bombers in Baquba.” The 38-year-old woman, Ibitisma Odwan, nicknamed “Mother Fatima,” was caught in Hommadi village, which is east of Baquba. According to the defense ministry spokesman, Mohammed al-Askari, Odwan was responsible for training female suicide bombers including a 15-year-old girl “who was allegedly tricked by her husband and two women into wearing an explosives belt.”

Without a doubt, there have been numerous attacks by female jihadists in Iraq. However, there have not been any major attacks carried out by women in other branches of al-Qaeda, like al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Perhaps there have not been any female suicide bombers in Afghanistan due to the strong influence of the Taliban. When issuing his statement regarding the role of women in jihad, Zawahiri had to consider the fact that many of al-Qaeda’s supporters, such as the Taliban, do not believe women should play a military role in jihad. Also, many men believe that women should stay at home, raising children and supporting the men who do jihad.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb is another branch of al-Qaeda which has not seen any females among the ranks of jihad. Perhaps this is because in the Islamic Maghreb there are enough men to carry out the attacks or perhaps it is due to the relatively vulnerable state of security in these countries. Maybe females who actively participate in jihad is a phenomenon of Iraq, where the security is extremely tight and there are not enough female officials to search all Iraqi women.

Regardless of what al-Qaeda’s leaders say, the number of female suicide bombers is on the rise in Iraq. Also, women are making themselves heard and are voicing their disagreement with Zawahiri’s statements on jihadist forums on the Internet. Some yearn to do jihad on the battlefield while others are fine with playing a more domestic role. And while the high level of al-Qaeda leadership does not include women, it is possible that, as the movement continues to grow and expand, women will take a more active role in jihad. There are already other Islamic terrorist groups which not only accept, but encourage women to join their ranks, like HAMAS. If a woman’s desire to do jihad is so strong that she is willing to die for Allah, despite what others say, she may very well earn her ticket to Paradise.
Like many businesses, governments, and individuals, jihadists have become increasingly aware of the benefits of open source software. Though a thriving piracy community exists on jihadist forums, with users sharing everything from stolen copies of Microsoft Office to Adobe Photoshop, some jihadists are encouraging others to utilize open-source programs not for their free price, but because of the perceived security benefits many have ascribed to open source software. The transparent nature of open source software development, in which any individual can review the original source code of a program, makes some jihadists feel more comfortable that the software they are using does not contain trojans, spyware, and other intrusive programs that may be used against them by law enforcement.

This trend of utilizing open source software, such as Mozilla Firefox, which many jihadists appreciate due to the available plug-ins related to protecting one’s anonymity online, is further extending to open source operating systems, especially those based on Linux. While most jihadists appear to use Windows-based operating systems, as is true for most internet users, discussion surrounding Linux-based operating systems seems to have increased. For example, a message thread in December 2008 on the Firdaws English jihadist forum revolved around which distribution of Linux to install, with many praising Linux-based operating systems as safer, more secure, and more stable than Windows. Likewise, on the Faloja jihadist forum, users posted Arabic video tutorials on how to install and use Linux-based operating systems.

One jihadist on the Firdaws English forum noted that the ability to run Linux from a LiveCD, whereby a user boots a computer and runs an operating system solely from a CD-ROM, might provide security benefits. Because no data can be written to the compact disc, running a computer from a LiveCD lowers the risk of the user leaving a data trail for law enforcement to find and also prevents other programs from being installed on a user’s computer.

As members of a strong online community, jihadists are constantly trolling the internet for new technology to bolster their anonymity and security and then share that information. Like all others who utilize open source software, jihadists can easily avail themselves of free tools to facilitate their online activities. Furthermore, these tools may make it more difficult for law enforcement to monitor jihadists online.
Iraq

**1/1**- Ansar al-Islam, through its media arm, al-Ansar Media Foundation, issued a video showcasing a suicide bombing and its executor in Khorsabad village in Ninawa province in Iraq. The video was posted on jihadist forums on January 1, 2009. The bomber, Abu Hamza al-Ansari, struck a building of the Kurdish Peshmerga in this village, near Mosul, allegedly killing and wounding dozens. Footage includes the will recitation of Abu Hamza, his execution of the operation, and clips from a television broadcast with individuals on the scene of the bombing. Abu Hamza’s words and those of the narrator glorify suicide bombings and incite Muslims to follow.

**1/3**- A video of mujahideen from Ansar al-Islam firing 16 mortar shells at enemy barracks in Kirkuk, Tamim province in Iraq, was issued on jihadist forums. The video shows several mujahideen in a field, some standing and holding rifles and others firing mortar shells. The target is shown in the distance, smoke rising from the ground. Ansar al-Islam claims that the heavy shelling inflicted casualties on the enemy and forced soldiers to flee.

**1/22**- Ansar al-Islam, via al-Ansar Media Foundation, issued a video of bombing a US Humvee in Balad, Salah al-Din province in Iraq, on jihadist forums. The date of attack is unspecified. Footage shows an IED detonating beneath a vehicle as it travels along a road. The vehicle moves out of camera range after it is struck by the IED.

**1/23**- The Council of Shariah and Justice of Ansar al-Islam criticized democracy and the upcoming Iraqi provincial elections in a 13-page document issued to jihadist forums. The group portrays these elections as a means by which a Muslim “leaves the circle of Islam to ignorance and apostasy.” Various components of the democratic system are defined by the Council, such as candidates, constitutions, elections, and voters, which are dismissed for their defying man to legislate and govern alongside God.

**1/25**- Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, leader of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), urges Palestinians spread over the world to strike American and Jewish interests, and pledges that ISI strikes against US forces in Iraq will escalate in revenge for the Israeli offensive in Gaza. This message issued on jihadist forums on January 9, 2009. Baghdadi impresses upon Muslims that support to Muslim Palestinians in Gaza is a duty incumbent upon all. He also criticizes Arab rulers for their complicity in the Gaza offensive, and encourages Muslims to overthrow their governments.

**1/26**- The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), through its media arm, al-Furqan, produced a compilation video of sniper attacks and dedicated this production to Palestinians, particularly those in Gaza. This video, 31 minutes, 20 seconds in length and titled, “Power is the Shots (1),” was issued on jihadist forums on January 25, 2009. Footage shows many scenes of sniper strikes targeting enemy soldiers in Iraq as these soldiers are on patrol, standing outside their vehicles, inside their vehicles, and on rooftops. Narration is provided that glorifies snipers and their impact in war.

Afghanistan

**1/8**- The Taliban claims killing 15 Canadian soldiers in a suicide bombing in Maywand district, Kandahar province in Afghanistan, and downing a NATO helicopter in Marja district in Helmand. The bomber, al-Hafiz Muhammad, detonated explosives on his person, destroying two vehicles and killing fifteen soldiers. According to the message, after the attack, Canadian forces opened fire on civilians, causing deaths and injuries. Media reports indicate that two US soldiers and three civilians were killed in a suicide car bombing in a Maywand market on January 8. In Marja district in Helmand province, the Taliban claims, that on January 5, it fired an anti-aircraft weapon that brought down a NATO helicopter. They add that wreckage of the helicopter was discovered by the Taliban in the desert of Sistani area.
Jihadi Activity by Region

1/11- The Taliban claims killing 21 Afghan soldiers in Farah province and declares “liberating” Ghorak district in Kandahar province. The group also claims firing a rocket at the location of a meeting in Paktia province in which Awakening militia elements were in attendance. In Bakwa district in Farah on January 12, the Taliban detonated what it calls a “powerful” explosive on a military vehicle, killing 21 soldiers. The previous night in the same area, the group reports a similar operation striking foreign forces. Ghorak district in Kandahar, according to the Taliban, was “liberated” on January 10 after a blockade of nearly two months by the mujahideen.

1/12- The Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), produced a video depicting military training of mujahideen and an operation targeting a US base in Paktia province in Afghanistan. The video, titled “Path to Paradise 4”, was posted on January 10, 2009 to a Turkish jihadist website. It contains Uzbek narration and Russian subtitles, and carries a date of October 31, 2008. Footage of Military training focuses on firearms and the ability to fire various types from different positions. One scene within this training footage shows mujahideen practicing to take hostages. Scenes of the operation show the mujahideen continuously firing rockets and heavy artillery at the targeted base and enemy aircraft. Other footage shows smoke and fire rising from the base. The date of the attack is unspecified.

1/17- The Taliban took credit for an attack on the German Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan. While media reports have indicated that Germans were wounded but not killed, in the attack, the Taliban claims to have killed eight Germans and wounded many, noting that “several of the killed and wounded were among the higher-ranking embassy diplomats.” The group states that the car bombing was carried out with a Toyota Corolla, driven by an individual named Shams al-Rahman.

Algeria

1/1- Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claims 21 operations in Northern provinces in Algeria between September and December 2008 in a communiqué issued on jihadist forums. These operations, comprised of ambushes, detonations of IEDs, and enemy captures, struck Algerian forces in the following provinces: Ain Deffa, Bejaia, Biskra, Boumerdes, Constantine, Jijel, M’sila Setif, Skikda, Tissemsilt, and Tizi Ouzou. One operation, carried out on October 6 in M’sila province, involved AQIM kidnapping and killing a “traitor,” planting explosives on his corpse, and detonating it when soldiers arrived to examine him. AQIM claims killing at least 29 soldiers in operations during this period, and acknowledges one of its fighters as a “martyr.”

1/3- Three ambushes targeting Algerian security forces in Jijel and Setif provinces in Algeria are featured in a 41-minute, 26-second video issued by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and posted on jihadist forums. Footage from the three attacks shows the planning involved for the conduct of the ambushes, movement of the mujahideen, implementation of the ambushes, and weapons, equipment, and documents taken from the battlefield. AQIM claims killing at least 16 security elements in these three ambushes.

1/14- Abu Musab Abdul Wadud, leader of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), calls upon Muslims in North Africa, Mauritania in particular, to strike Jewish and Western interests in an audio speech issued on jihadist forums. During the speech, the video shows approximately one minute and 30 seconds of footage of a protest and confrontation between protestors and riot police. Wadud’s audio speech is his second message regarding the Israeli offensive in Gaza, the first released on January 1, exhorting Muslims to strike Jews everywhere. This rhetoric continues in the latest release, where Wadud address Algerian Muslim citizens and security forces, Mauritanians, Muslims everywhere in North Africa, and Palestinian Muslims in Gaza.
1/20- AQIM denied reports of its mujahideen dying of plague and claims six attacks in Algeria in two communiqués issued on jihadist forums. These attacks struck Algerian security forces between January 1 and January 16, allegedly killing at least 12 individuals. All attacks were carried out with bombings. AQIM denied three reports that appeared in local and foreign media, one of which regards mujahideen dying from plague. The group denied this report as “ridiculous” and charges the plague does not exist but “in the minds and hearts of those agents who are falsely associated to the field of journalism.” The two other reports, that AQIM leader Abu Musab Abdul Wadud threatened Egyptian actors Adel Imam, and that mujahideen are besieged in the mountains and are willing to surrender, are also regarded as fabrications.

1/17- Declaring victory over Ethiopian forces, the Shabaab declared victory over Ethiopian forces and congratulated Muslims for the Ethiopian “escape” from Mogadishu. They state: “The sun rose over the city of Mogadishu… and not even one Ethiopian soldier was left after their remaining soldiers fled their centers, heading towards the Bay region to find their miserable fate, Allah willing.” The Shabaab went on to say that jihad will not cease and African Union (AU) forces “who act under the guise of alleged peacekeeping” in Mogadishu will be struck. A second communiqué from the Shabaab, issued the following day, claimed a fierce clash with African Union forces at the former military academy in Mogadishu. The clash occurred on January 17, and according to the Shabaab, two soldiers were killed in addition to another number.

1/26- The Shabaab boasted of victory in the Ethiopian withdrawal from Baidoa, and threatens Somali forces remaining in the city in a communiqué posted to jihadist forums by the Global Islamic Media Front. After the Ethiopian withdrawal on January 25, Shabaab spokesman Abu Mansour addressed Somali security forces and advised they abandon their weapons and repudiate their actions before the mujahideen attack. The group added in regard to the Ethiopian withdrawal: “They left behind them the apostate scum from the remnants of the collapsed government forces to face their inevitable fate, with permission from Allah, at the hands of the lions of Islam who are stationed at the outskirts of the city.”

1/31- Footage of an operation performed by a group calling itself Tawhid and Jihad Group, targeting an Israeli vehicle near Kissufim, adjacent to Gaza, was distributed on jihadist forums on by the GIMF. GIMF states that this footage was received “fully and exclusively” from Tawhid and Jihad. The video is 5 minutes and 52 seconds in length and shows the bombing operation by the group and ensuing gunfire, in addition to clips showing death and violence in Gaza. The bombing occurred on January 27. GIMF asks mujahideen to document their actions in such audio-visual material so as to “cut the road to those who do business with the blood of Muslims in Gaza.”

Somalia

1/1- The Shabaab, an insurgent group in Somalia, claims strikes on African Union (AU) and Somali forces in Mogadishu in two communiqués released to jihadist forums. The claimed attacks were carried out on December 30 in separate districts in the Somali capital. In Hodon, the group claims striking headquarters of Somali police and AU, inflicting an unknown number of deaths and injuries amongst the enemy ranks. The Shabaab claims that enemy tanks bombed residential sections and crowded markets.

1/9- The Shabaab posted messages claiming to have inflicted heavy casualties in Ethiopian and Somali military ranks in nine communiqués issued on jihadist forums. Such attacks were performed in Bay, Gedo, Lower Shabelle and Mogadishu provinces. One of these attacks, which took place on January 7 in Dinsoor, Bay province, the Shabaab claims inflicted “great death” upon Ethiopian and Somali ranks in a long clash. Attacks involved the use of firearms, grenades, mines and rockets.

Israel & Palestinian Territories

1/23- A message attributed to Abu Qatada al-Filistini (the Palestinian), a jihadist ideologue imprisoned in Long Lartin prison in Britain, regarding Gaza and events afterwards, was posted on jihadist forums on January 23, 2009. The message from Abu Qatada was received by the Islamic Media Observatory. He addresses Ezzedeen al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, praising them for victory in the conflict, but chastising their failure to establish an Islamic State. Abu Qatada writes in regard to the Gaza offensive and its end: “This battle was the last shoe in the face of Bush and his gang. With grace and mercy from Allah, it will be a new turning-point for the fall of the state of Jewish infidelity.”