The Taliban Threat Spreads to Mainland Pakistan

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Covering the Waterfront: The Continuing, Myriad Threats from both Leader-led and Leader-less Terrorism

by Prof. Bruce Hoffman

AQIM Expansion Throughout North Africa

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AQAP Leader Gives Support to Southern Yemenis

Abu Baseer al-Wuhayshi, the leader of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), gave support to the people of southern Yemen in an audio speech issued on jihadist forums on May 13, 2009, titled, “To Our People in the South.” His support came amidst rising separatist sentiment in the south, where fighting has recently intensified between Yemeni government forces and tribesmen. Wuhayshi seeks to capitalize on this violence, saying that AQAP can relate to the people of the south and also feels the “oppression” of the Yemeni government. He argued that governance by Shariah, not socialism as attempted before by southern separatists, is the only means to protect their rights guaranteed by Islam. Wuhayshi urges southerners to seek their rights, and at the same time to rally around AQAP.

ISI Leader Speaks on Arrest Claim, Pope, Netanyahu

Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, the leader of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), the al-Qaeda front in Iraq, spoke in two audio messages released in May 2009. The first, titled, “Lying Agents,” was issued on jihadist forums on June 12. Baghdadi denied claims of his arrest and incited Sunni Iraqis against the Shi’ite-majority government. The second speech, titled, “Al-Aqsa Between the Falsehood of the Christians and the Malice of the Jews,” was issued on May 30; in it, Baghdadi continued to deny arrest claims and decried the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the Middle East. The ISI leader also said that the Pope “desecrated” Muslim land through his presence and “threatened” Muslims by calling to Christianity. He argued that there is a conspiracy between Jews and Christians over the land of Israel, Jerusalem in particular, to eliminate Muslims and await the return of their savior.

Tehrik-i-Taliban Punjab Claims Lahore Bombing

Tehrik-i-Taliban Punjab, calling itself, “Tehrik-i-Taliban Punjab,” claimed a car bombing in Lahore, the capital of Punjab province in Pakistan, in a Turkish-language communiqué posted on Turkish jihadist websites on May 27, 2009. The group said that on May 27, a vehicle laden with 100 kg of explosives was blown up outside a security building, destroying the building and killing dozens of police. This attack, they said, targeted the “nest of evil” in Lahore, and is a “humble gift” to the mujahideen who suffer beneath the attacks of Pakistani forces in Swat. Tehrik-i-Taliban Punjab asked Muslims in Pakistan to stay away from areas where the enemy is “taking advantage” of them, so that they are not harmed by jihadi attacks. Media reports indicate that at least 30 people were killed and more than 230 injured in the car bombing.


Al-Fursan Media, an English-language jihadist media group, published the second issue of its English-language jihadist magazine, “Jihad Recollections.” This second issue, 73-pages in length, was distributed on jihadist forums on May 16, 2009. Al-Fursan boasted that the magazine received attention from both the jihadist communist and non-jihadists including academics. The cover of the magazine shows US President Barack Obama, his name in chains, and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, whose name is filled with “1924.” Al-Fursan explains that the chains represent Obama’s slavery to the policies of the “Zionists,” and the 1924 in Ataturk’s name symbolize the year he “destroyed” the Caliphate and expelled members of the Ottoman dynasty from Turkey.

AQAP Video on Yemeni Security Director Murder

Al-Malahem Foundation, the media arm of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), produced a video regarding the murder of Muhammad Rabish Kielan, the security director of Madghal district, Marib province in Yemen. The video, titled, “Rabish and Just Punishment,” was released on jihadist forums on May 20, 2009. Al-Qaeda in the South of the Arabian Peninsula, one of AQAP’s constituent groups, claimed Rabish’s murder in a communiqué dated October 25, 2008, five days after the murder occurred. In that message, Rabish’s murder was justified on the grounds that his actions led to the death of four mujahideen; a brief eulogy for each is provided. Footage shows scenes of the four individuals’ mutilated bodies, in addition to a scene showing the parcel bomb that was used to kill Rabish.

Jihadist Says Forum Member Arrived in Afghanistan

A member of the al-Fallujah jihadist forum is said to have arrived in Afghanistan and settled amongst the Taliban in a message posted on May 20, 2009. The jihadist who made this announcement gives effusive congratulations and praise to the member, “al morabitoune 8,” noting his fervor for jihad, love for the mujahideen, particularly the Taliban, and his concern for Muslim plight. The departed member is also noted to have been active in the jihad in Iraq and longed to return to the battlefield.

TIP Responds to US Treasury Designation, Arrests

The Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) responded to the designation of its leader, Abdul Haq, as a Specially Designated Foreign Terrorist, and reports in Pakistani media of arrests of 9 TIP members in a communiqué issued on jihadist forums on May 1, 2009. The US Department of Treasury designated Abdul Haq on April 20, freezing any finan-
Jihadist Suggests Forest Fires in Western Countries

Recalling past messages inciting Muslims to burn forests in Western countries as a means to cause economic damage, a user on the al-Fallujah jihadist forum posted a message on May 1, 2009, repeating this suggestion, and asking other users to contribute maps and suggestions. He said: “Scorching an extensive forest is an easy matter that does not require a number of individuals and does not require physical training or equipment... One person is enough to commit this act.” One user recalled the damage caused by forest fires in Australia, and another posts a Google map of the State of California, noting that the state has a large number of forests. One forum participant disputed the legitimacy of intentionally causing forest fires, especially due to its impact on animal life and pollution.

Jihadist Forum Provides Grad Rocket Training Video

A video explaining the dimensions and mechanisms of a Grad rocket, a Russian-made rocket that is used frequently by Iraqi and Palestinian insurgents, was released by the al-Tahaddi jihadist forum on May 16, 2009, and distributed amongst other jihadist forums. In the 11 minute, 6 second video, an individual provides a detailed tutorial of the rocket and how it is launched.

AQIM Political Committee Head, Shura Council Member Speak

AQAP issued the ninth issue of its electronic magazine, “Echo of the Epics” (Sada al-Malahem) on jihadist forums on May 29, 2009. The issue is 56-pages in length and consists of 28 articles and readers’ contributions, some of which are statements previously released by AQAP such as its two claims for the suicide bombings targeting South Korean tourists and officials in Hadramout and Sana’a. A message in this issue from AQAP Emir Abu Baseer al-Wuhayshi, titled, “I Won, by the Lord of the Ka’aba,” focuses on these suicide bombings, justifying the acts and questioning why Yemeni rulers condemned them. Another article provides religious justification for targeting tourists. A supplement is provided with this issue: a 194-page book, titled, “Exposing the Doubts of Democrats and Breaking the Tyrant of Yemen,” by Sheikh Muhammad Abdul Qadr al-Murshedi. The book serves as an indictment of the constitution of Yemen and the democratic process.

Maqdisi Criticizes Pope, Urges Action During Middle East Visit

Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a jihadist ideologue, urged Muslims to not forget slanderous comments made by Pope Benedict XVI towards the Prophet Muhammad during his visit to the Middle East in a message posted on his website, tawhed.ws, and jihadist forums on May 7, 2009. Maqdisi, who was the spiritual mentor of slain al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, refers to a quote cited by the Pope during a speech in September 2006 at the University of Regensburg in Germany. The message criticizing the Pope and addressing Muslims over his offense was published in Arabic and English languages, and is accompanied by a 354-page book.

Jihadist Sees “Golden Opportunity” for Jihad in Somalia

Arguing that Somalia is easier to access than other jihadi fronts and the Shabaab al-Mujahideen already control major cities, a user on the al-Fallujah jihadist forum posted a message on May 6, 2009, saying that there is a “golden opportunity” for jihad in Somalia. Jihadists who seek physical combat in a land of jihad, he said, should look towards Somalia not only because of its accessibility and success of the Shabaab, but because of the similarity between the Shabaab ideology and that of al-Qaeda. He added that Djibouti offers the easiest means to enter Somalia, in contrast to Ethiopia and Kenya, where travel across the borders is difficult.

AQAP: Ninth Issue of “Echo of the Epics”
I s al-Qaeda on the run or on the march? This question has overshadowed the discourse on terrorism and counterterrorism since the war on terrorism began eight years ago. Last year, it crystallized in a pointed debate over whether the most salient terrorist threat we face is primarily “bottom-up” — that is, self-selected, self-radicalized “bunches of guys” loosely grouped in entirely independent cells — or if it continues to be posed from the “top down” — by existing, identifiable terrorist organizations actively exploiting the radicalization process for new recruits to whom training, guidance, and direction is then provided. Recent developments in the United States and two new intelligence assessments from two key European countries firmly fixed in the terrorists’ cross hairs shed further important light on this debate. And, while some disagreement of emphasis will likely persist, what remains incontrovertible is a serious, continuing terrorist threat.

Four terrorist incidents in as many weeks in the U.S. have re-focused attention on “bottom-up” terrorism — leaderless jihad in the Islam context — often called the “lone wolf” phenomenon in its American variant. The first surfaced in May when FBI agents and New York Police Department (NYPD) officers arrested four men on charges of plotting to bomb two Jewish synagogues in the Bronx, New York and shoot down military aircraft at an upstate Air National Guard base. All but one member of the cell were American-born, U.S. citizens who had served time in prison and were converts to Islam (the fourth man was a Haitian national). Although their ability to actually implement these heinous plans was clearly more in the realm of wishful thinking than bona fide operational capability, the seriousness of their intention was beyond doubt. Authorities described the men as “eager to bring death to Jews” and heralded the arrests as the proof of the need for heightened, ongoing vigilance against an unrelenting menace.

Then, ten days later, a militant opponent of legalized abortion in America gunned down Dr. George Tiller, a Wichita, Kansas medical doctor, who operated a clinic that performed late-term abortions. Three days after Dr. Tiller’s murder, a man who had converted to Islam while imprisoned in Yemen, shot to death one U.S. Army recruiter and seriously wounded another outside an Army-Navy Career Center in Little Rock, Arkansas. And, in mid-June, an 88-year-old white supremacist and virulent anti-Semite fatally wounded a guard at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum before he was himself shot by other officers.

This series of plots and attacks within so brief a time seemed to justify arguments about the salience of “decentralized terrorism” as the main threat now facing the U.S. and perhaps other countries as well. However, two new reports respectively by the British House of Commons Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) and the Netherlands’ General Intelligence and Security Service (Algemene Inlichtingen en Veiligheidsdienst, or AIVD) paint an alarming picture of the growing dimensions, capabilities, and subversion of Western societies by existing, identifiable terrorist organizations — and specifically by al-Qaeda and its Pakistani jihadi allies.

The House of Commons report, issued in May 2009, follows the seminal official investigation into the 7/7 bombings previously released in May 2006. The new report, titled, Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented? Review of the Intelligence on the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005, is the most authoritative investigation of the links between the July 2005 attacks and other UK-based al-Qaeda terrorist networks. It focuses on the connections between the London bombers with their would-
be counterparts involved in the plot that British authorities dubbed “Operation Crevice”——the plan to bomb a London nightclub (The Ministry of Sound) and a shopping mall in Kent (the Bluewater Shopping Center).

On 30 April 2007, one of the longest terrorist trials in British history concluded with the convictions of five British Muslims charged with plotting to use an explosive device constructed of fertilizer to attack the nightclub and shopping center. The authorities first became aware of the plot as a result of their identification in 2003 of a British Muslim named Mohammed Qayum Khan (MQK) as an “al-Qaeda facilitator.” MI5 concluded that Khan, a part-time taxi driver residing in Luton, was the leader a UK-based “Al-Qaeda facilitation network”——the term that MI5 uses to “refer to groups of extremists who support the Al-Qaeda cause and who are involved in providing financial and logistical support, rather than being directly involved in terrorist attack planning.” MI5 had also linked MQK to al-Qaeda networks in Pakistan and to the Taliban as well.

Testimony in the trial further revealed that MQK had been “in direct contact with one of Osama bin Laden’s most senior lieutenants”——Abdul Hadi al-Iraqi. A Kurd and former officer in Saddam’s Hussein’s army, Abdul Hadi was described in court as a bin Laden “confidant” and key liaison with the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the commander of al-Qaeda in Iraq between 2003 and 2006.12 According to Muhammed Junaid Babar, whom prosecutors termed a “junior al-Qaeda fixer” who subsequently turned FBI informant, Abdul Hadi was the overall commander of al-Qaeda operations in Britain until his capture in 2007 by U.S. forces in Iraq. Abdul Hadi was the “ultimate emir on top” for the UK jihadis, Babar told court. “But underneath him there were multiple emirs, three or four emirs, before you reached Abdul Hadi, and [MQK] was one of those emirs.” It has been reported that in late 2004 Abdul Hadi met MSK and Tanweer in Pakistan and allegedly “retasked” them to undertake the suicide bombing attack on London’s Underground.16

In January 2004, MI5 identified another British Muslim of Pakistani descent named Omar Khyam as the principal courier for MQK’s network.17 Within a month, however, as a result of continued surveillance of both MQK and Khyam, MI5 concluded, in the words of the ISC report, that they “were no longer looking at a facilitation network providing financial support to Al-Qaeda overseas, but had instead found a bomb plot probably aimed at the UK. At this point,” the report continues, “KHYAM became one of MI5’s top targets and Operation CREVICE became their top priority.” MI5 obviously remained intensely interested in MQK as well: who was now regarded as a “trusted member of the CREVICE network.” Still another “significant Al-Qaeda-linked facilitator,” involved in fund raising, radicalization, and recruitment in the UK was also identified by the security service but has not been publicly named. These investigations further uncovered at least two other UK-based al-Qaeda networks with

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7 Eight persons were initially arrested in the plot of whom five were convicted (Omar Khyam, Jawad Akbar, Salahuddin Amin, Waheed Mahmood, and Anthony Garcia—all were British citizens except for Garcia who was a dual British-Algerian national residing in the UK). Two were acquitted (Shujah Mahmood and Nabeel Hussain) and another person (Mohammed Momin Khawaja) is being tried in Canada. Intelligence and Security Committee, Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?, p. 11.

8 Operation Crevice has been described as the “largest operation MI5 and the police had ever undertaken.” Some 30 addresses were searched; 45,000 man-hours were consumed by monitoring and transcription; and, 20 surveillance camera operations were mounted involved 34,000 man-hours. Specific information on the number of covert searches of the suspects’ property and baggage and eavesdropping devices deployed remains classified. Intelligence and Security Committee, Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?, p. 9.


10 Intelligence and Security Committee, Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?, p. 29.


15 Ibid.


17 Cobain and Vasagar, “Free——the man accused of being an al-Qaeda leader, aka ’Q’”; and, Intelligence and Security Committee, Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?, p. 7.

18 Intelligence and Security Committee, Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?, p. 7.

19 Ibid., p. 29.

20 Ibid., p. 13.
direct links back to the organization’s senior command in Pakistan.21

As a result of the surveillance mounted as part of Operation Crevice, at least two years before the 7 July 2005 London bombings, MI5 had come across two members of the latter cell. They were its leader, Mohammad Siddique Khan (MSK, who despite the same surname had no family connection to MQK), age 30, and Shahzad Tanweer, age 22.22 Data obtained from MQK’s mobile telephone revealed several telephone conversations that he had with MSK on at least four occasions—13, 19, and 24 July 2003 and on 17 August 2003. And, Khyam met with both MSK and Tanweer at least three times between February and March 2004.23

The Intelligence and Security Committee report also concluded unequivocally that MSK had traveled to Pakistan at least twice for the purposes of receiving training in terrorism and that he very likely had previously visited Afghanistan for the same purpose. In April 2004 an unidentified terrorist detainee had told his interrogators that two men known as “Ibrahim” and “Zubair” had traveled to Pakistan in 2003 for training and met the other members of the “Operation Crevice” cell. The two pseudonyms were later conclusively linked to MSK and another person from the Leeds area, named Mohammed Shakil.24 Hence, it is now clear that MSK made at least two trips to Pakistan for terrorist training; the one referred to previously between November 2003 and February 2005 and another between June and August 2003.25 Moreover, MQK was described in court documents as having been “instrumental” in arranging for MSK and Tanweer’s first visit in 2003 to the al-Qaeda terrorist training camp in Pakistan’s Malakand Agency.26 The most consequential trip, however, at least with respect to the 7/7 bombings, was the one that MSK and Tanweer took to Pakistan on 19 November 2004.27 Both men again returned to the camp in Malakand.28 Significantly, members of at least two other British Muslim terrorist cells were present at the camp at the same: Mukhtar Said Ibrahim (MSI), the leader of the failed 21 July 2005 suicide bomb plot; and, Abdullah Ahmed Ali, one of the leaders of the August 2006 airline bombing plot.29

In sum, rather than the isolated, unconnected outbursts of rage from entirely self-radicalized, self-selected, independently-operating terrorists—which is how British authorities initially described the 7 July 2005 bombing, failed 21 July 2005 attacks, and August 2006 airline bombing plots—a connecting thread directly linking Pakistan to Britain and al-Qaeda to each of these incidents is visible.30 This incontrovertible evidence was doubtless what Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, the then-Director General of the British Security Service (MI5) referred to in her landmark November 2006 public address to a London audience. “We are aware of numerous plots to kill people and to damage our economy,” she explained. “What do I mean by numerous? Five? Ten? No, nearer 30 that we currently know of,” Manningham-Buller continued. “These plots often have linked back to al-Qaeda in Pakistan and through those links al-Qaeda gives guidance and training to its largely British foot soldiers here on an extensive and growing scale.”31

The AIVD, the Dutch intelligence and security service, is among the most professional and prescient of the world’s intelligence and security agencies. Its mission is to “safeguard the national security of the Netherlands by identifying threats and risks which are not immediately visible. To this end, it conducts investigations both inside and outside the country.”32 In sum, the AIVD is responsible for countering non-military threats to Dutch national security; while a military intelligence counterpart concentrates on international threats to the Netherlands from other countries, including espionage. Though far smaller than many of its Western counterparts,33 the AIVD is

21 Ibid., p. 14.
23 Intelligence and Security Committee, Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?, pp. 21-23.
24 Ibid.
26 Cobain and Vasagar, “Free—the man accused of being an al-Qaeda leader, aka ‘Q’”; and, Malik, “My brother the bomber.”
27 Mark Kukis, With Friends Like These.... New Republic, 20 February 2006.
an elite and perspicacious service that is as impressive for its
early identification and incisive analysis of emerging trends as it
appears genuinely able to “think out of the box.” The radical-
ization phenomenon, for instance—-involving homegrown,
domestic threats by organizationally unaffiliated militants—
—that is now so ingrained in our thinking and assessment of
contemporary jihadi threats, was first publicly highlighted by
the AIVD six years ago in its Annual Report 2002. Thus,
as far back as 2001, AIVD agents and analysts had detected
increased terrorist recruitment efforts among Muslim youth
living in the Netherlands whom it was previously assumed had
been assimilated into Dutch society and culture.14 This assess-
ment was proven tragically correct in November 2003 when
a product precisely of this trend that the AIVD had correctly
identified, a 17 year-old Dutch-Moroccan youth named Mo-
hammad Bouyeri, brutally murdered the controversial film
maker, Theo van Gogh, as he rode his bicycle along an Am-
sterdam street.35 Accordingly, any assessment of current jihadi
trends by the AIVD is to be taken very seriously, indeed.

The recently released AIVD Annual Report 2008,16 however,
is particularly noteworthy not because of the radicalized
individuals it had focused so intently on in the past, but for its
emphasis on the growing threat posed by al-Qaeda and other
established jihadi organizations. “Local Autonomous net-
works,” the report argues, “still appeared to be divided and to
lack leader figures;” while at the same time highlighting that
“Al-Qaeda’s ability to commit and direct terrorist attacks has
increased in recent years. The AIVD received a growing num-
ber of indications that individuals from Europe are receiving
military training at camps in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border
region.”37 Further elucidating this key point, the report goes
on to explain how

An analysis conducted in 2008 by the AIVD and verified by
fellow services indicates that core Al-Qaeda’s ability to carry
out terrorist attacks has increased in recent years. To a great
extent, this is explained by the many alliances Al-Qaeda has
forged with other networks and groups, both in the Paki-
stan-Afghanistan border region itself and elsewhere in the
Islamic world. . . .

One development of particular concern is the growing
evidence that people from Europe are undergoing military
training at camps in the border region.38

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After the US-led coalition forces intervened in Afghanistan in October 2001, multiple threat groups in Afghanistan including the Afghan Taliban and al-Qaeda relocated to tribal Pakistan. Nearly seven years later, Pakistani security forces (primarily the army), are fighting a high-intensity insurgency in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA)—the tribal belt separating Afghanistan from Pakistan. The insurgent and terrorist groups located on that rugged border mount attacks against US-led coalition and Afghan forces in Afghanistan and against Pakistani forces and other targets in Pakistan. The spillover effect of the insurgency in FATA into mainland Pakistan is profound.

In 2008-9, the insurgency spread from FATA to adjacent areas, most notably to Swat, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Kohat, and certain parts of Baluchistan. As a result of the fighting between the military and the Pakistani Taliban, about 5.5 million people have been displaced from their homes in Swat, once a Pakistani tourist destination. Of the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the first half of 2009, 4.5 million are registered and at least another one million are unregistered. Approximately a million more have been displaced from FATA and they live throughout Pakistan. With the Pakistani military planning to step up operations in South Waziristan, the IDP numbers are likely to grow sharply in the second half of 2009. A tiny minority of the IDPs are supporters and sympathizers of the Pakistani Taliban.\(^1\)

To ease the pressure on the Taliban operational and support infrastructures in FATA, Pakistani Taliban, al-Qaeda, and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi have been mounting attacks in mainland Pakistan. Outside FATA, the two provinces that have suffered the most are the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) and Punjab. Although Baluchistan faces a significant threat from nationalist insurgents, Sindh and Baluchistan are the least affected by politico-religious groups. Regardless, the Pakistani Taliban intends to establish a presence in Southern Punjab and in Sindh, especially in Karachi.\(^2\) Although support for violence and the Taliban style of governance has decreased dramatically in FATA and elsewhere in Pakistan in 2008, the threat posed by the Pakistani Taliban, al-Qaeda, and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi remains significant.

The Context

When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, the seeds of extremism were planted in Pakistan. As Afghanistan’s neighbor, Pakistan became the single most important frontline state in the fight against the Soviets. To fight the Soviets in Afghanistan, General Zia, the then ruler of Pakistan, harnessed religion to mobilize the Muslims to achieve a political goal. As the fight was framed in the context of a holy war, a Sunni extremist movement emerged. To fight against the superpower and remain in control, Zia used both US and Saudi funding to fight the Soviets and to Islamize Pakistan. The protracted anti-Soviet multinational Afghan campaign (1979-1989) militarized a segment of Sunnis globally, with Pakistan as its epicenter. Jihad in Afghanistan and Kashmir had many volunteers from Pakistan and overseas. Those from Pakistan, including Karachi, who went to fight in Afghanistan and Kashmir were from the Deobandhi tradition.\(^3\)

Most recruits came from the heart of Pakistan. Known as the Seraiki belt, the region located in Punjab touches the

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2. Faraz Khan, *Close aide of Baitullah Mehsud arrested*, Daily Times, April 14, 2009
3. The Sunnis belonged either to the Deobandhi or Brelvis. Brelvis are also known as Ahel Sunnah Wal Jammah tradition. There exist a very small community of Wahabis in Karachi – they are mostly indigenous and a few recent converts.
borders of Sindh, NWFP, and Baluchistan. An underdeveloped region, the Seraiki belt spawned most of the militant groups such as the Harkatul Mujahidin created in Dera Ismail Khan (NWFP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipai Sahabah Pakistan from Jiang (Punjab), and Jaysh-e-Mohommed from Bhawalpur (Punjab). Most of the fighters came from northern and southern Punjab. For example, Muridhe (in Punjab), produced Lashkar-Toiba.

In parallel, the threat was compounded by the Saudi-Iranian rivalry. After the Iranian Revolution in 1979 following the fall of the Shah, Iran and Saudi Arabia poured funds into Pakistan. Both ideologically and organizationally, Saudi Arabia and Iran began to empower Sunni and Shia communities, respectively. Their funding streams also strengthened Shia and Sunni extremism, spawning their own political extremist and violent groups. With Saudi funding to counter the growing Iranian influence, there was a shift in power to Wahabi-Deobandi. Sponsored by the ruling family, the Kingdom, and the Saudi public, Saudi-sponsored preachers, schools, and mosques proliferated in Pakistan. Pakistan today remains a playground for Iran-Saudi competition to fund Shia and Sunni groups. Even after the defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan in 1989, both the jihadists and their patrons, particularly the House of Saud, continued to sponsor the anti-Shia forces. Saudi sponsorship created fault lines in the fabric of many societies. “When a Muslim got money, he called the other a non-Muslim. Then the dynamics of politics in Pakistan changed.”4 In response to Saudi sponsorship, Iran stepped up its support. Throughout parts of Karachi, Iranian and Saudi influences are evident.

“Pakistan’s problem has been money. Whosoever gives it is our friend.”

The developments in Pakistan were no exception to the growing Sunni – Shia divide throughout the region. Although Sunni families rule throughout the Gulf, the Shia make up a significant population including in Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. With the rise of Iran, these monarchies perceive a threat from them and their Iranian sponsors. The US exploited this threat—“We are going to bring democracy.” Even in Dubai, the area’s largest hospital—which provides free medicine—is supported by Iran. The impoverished Shia look towards Iran as their benefactor and patron. Saudi support to Sunni groups, meant to counter such influence, created an unintended consequence—a globally vibrant Sunni extremist movement. Until al-Qaeda attacked Riyadh in May of 2003, Saudi support enabled al-Qaeda to spread its ideology.

Having defeated the Soviets, Pakistan failed to control the jubilant Sunni extremist movement that had developed its own momentum. To quote a Pakistani police officer, Dost Ali: “After the defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan, when the jihadists started to use the same tools to fight the West, the Pakistan establishment said, ‘Please do not use that tool.’ But, the successful side said: ‘Why should I not use that tool?’ ” Referring to the post 9-11 proliferation of threat groups seeking to attack the West, Dos Ali added: “As no one had copyright of this latest tool, there were many franchises.”5 Drawing an analogy with KFCs and Pizza huts, he added: “Each fulfilled their desires of accruing political and financial rewards, including going to heaven.”6

The Sunni extremist movement turned their sights on the remaining superpower – the US, their allies and friends. With the returnees from Afghanistan, the Shia community of Karachi was attacked throughout the 1990s. The community of Shia, a sizable population in Karachi, became the target of the Sunni extremist movement. In addition to prominent Shia clerics and other community leaders, their businessmen and professionals—notably doctors—were murdered. The law and order situation deteriorated and the police were forced to act.  

4  Dost Ali, Police Officer, Pakistan, April 2008.
5  Ibid
6  Ibid
7  Ibid
Before the al-Qaeda attacks in the US on September 11, 2001, the attacks in Pakistan were largely triggered by the Sunni-Shia divide. A former chief of police of Karachi, Tariq Jamil said: “The attacks of September 11, 2001, came when we were coping with sectarian terrorism. The situation in Karachi became bad in 2000-1.” The tide turned against the West after September 11, 2001. The US attack against Afghanistan compounded the situation. It diverted the attention, focus, and energy of the Pakistani extremists and terrorists against the West. Tariq Jamil said: “Hitherto they believed that the Shia were against Islam. Now they believed that both the Shia and the US were against Islam.” To meet this escalating threat, different groups and individuals that had not worked together started to unite. The extremists from the north and south of Punjab and the jihadists from Karachi who had trained together started to work together.

With public protests following the US-led intervention in Afghanistan, the jihadists saw their activities as representing popular sentiments. Both criminals and terrorists infiltrated the protest and agitation that followed the US-led coalition intervention in Afghanistan. “They wanted to do something. As they saw themselves as the vanguard, they wanted to act. They attacked the US consulate in Karachi. The attack was not triggered by local conditions in Pakistan.” After 9-11, global developments principally drove international threats, with the military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq being the main motivators. A marked increase in threats came after the invasion of Afghanistan. To facilitate the movement of operatives out of Pakistan and into target countries, al-Qaeda moved its most capable agent, Khalid Sheikh Mohamed, to Karachi. The threat in Karachi increased exponentially. Not only did al-Qaeda mount attacks there, but it also used the city to strike targets overseas. Timely US assistance enabled Pakistani law enforcement, security, and intelligence to detect and neutralize the al-Qaeda presence in Karachi. Nonetheless, the jihadist ideology persisted radicalizing both tribal and mainland Pakistani groups. Today, the bigger threat to Karachi is from like-minded Pakistan groups working with al-Qaeda and operating largely from tribal Pakistan. “In parallel, with the denial of political rights, there was no way to communicate with the state, it was better to communicate with God.”

A significant segment of the population turned to religion during the Musharraf period. They were the most vulnerable to extremist indoctrination and terrorist recruitment. Today, the Sunni extremist movement has developed its own momentum and threatens the world. Pakistan too suffers from Sunni extremism, nurtured during the last two decades.

The Threat to the Mainland:

The developments in the mainland were compounded by the developments in FATA. The developments in FATA were triggered by the relocation of al-Qaeda, Afghan Taliban, and a dozen other groups from Afghanistan to Pakistan after early 2002. The threat was contained to FATA in the formative years of the insurgency. With stepped up military operations in FATA and its adjacent areas, the terrorist threat is spreading to mainland Pakistan. The terrorist attacks in mainland Pakistan in 2008 and 2009 demonstrate that the threat will persist. Despite measures to contain the threat, the threat especially in NWFP and Punjab continues to grow. Despite measures taken by the government, the threat to Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, remains significant. Of the attacks, the suicide bombings remain most profound. Suicide bombings in 2008 surpassed the 2007 figures, with 61 attacks killing at least 889 people and injuring 2,072 others. The most significant attack included:

- **January 10, 2008**: Suicide bomber blows himself up among police guarding the High Court in Lahore, killing 24 people and wounding scores more.

- **January 14, 2008**: Nine people are killed in a roadside bomb attack in a low-income neighborhood of Karachi.

- **January 17, 2008**: A teenager blows himself up in a Shi’ite Muslim prayer hall in

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8 Tariq Jamil, Additional IG Sindh, previously Chief of Police of Karachi, April 2008
9 Ibid
10 Tariq Jamil, Additional IG Sindh, previously Chief of Police of Karachi, April 2008
11 Just like Karachi is a major transit point for trafficking high grade heroin from Afghanistan and Pakistan to the rest of the world, KSM used Karachi for transit to operate into the Middle East and to Southeast Asia.
12 Dost Ali, April 2008
13 Global Pathfinder II, the Database of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, Singapore, June 2009.
Peshawar. At least nine people are killed and 25 are wounded.

- **February 9, 2008:** Suicide bomber kills 25 people at opposition election rally in the northwestern town of Charsadda.

- **February 22, 2008:** Roadside bomb hits wedding party in northeastern Swat, killing at least 14 people.

- **February 25, 2008:** Suicide bomber kills army surgeon-general Lieutenant General Mushtaq Baig and seven other people in Rawalpindi.

- **March 4, 2008:** Two suicide bombers attack Pakistan Naval War College in Lahore, killing five people and wounding 19.

- **March 11, 2008:** Suicide bombs rip through seven-story police headquarters and a house in Lahore, killing at least 24 people and wounding more than 200.

- **March 15, 2008:** Bomb blast at Italian restaurant in Islamabad kills a Turkish woman and wounds 10 others, including four agents from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

- **July 2, 2008:** Suicide car bomb outside the Danish embassy in Islamabad kills eight people.

- **July 6, 2008:** Suicide bomber kills 15 people in an attack on police in Islamabad during a rally to mark the anniversary of an army raid on the radical Red Mosque.

- **August 12, 2008:** Roadside bomb rips through Pakistan air force bus in Peshawar, killing 13.

- **August 21, 2008:** Suicide bombers blow themselves up at two gates of a weapons factory in the town of Wah, killing at least 67 people and wounding at least 100.

- **September 3, 2008:** Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani escapes an apparent assassination attempt when two shots hit his motorcade, just three days before the country’s presidential election.

- **September 6, 2008:** Suicide bomber kills 33 people at a security checkpoint near Peshawar, the capital of North West Frontier Province.

- **September 11, 2008:** Suspected militants hurl grenades and fire into a mosque in Peshawar killing at least 20 worshippers.

- **September 20, 2008:** A suicide truck bomb kills 55 and wounds more than 250 and devastates the Marriott hotel in Islamabad.

The Pakistani Taliban conducted many of these attacks with the assistance of mainland Pakistani groups, notably Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, a sectarian group with long standing ties both with the Taliban and with al-Qaeda. In some of these attacks, al-Qaeda played a crucial role in providing the training and expertise. For instance, the Danish Embassy attack and the Marriott bombing were planned jointly by al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The Egyptian al-Qaeda operative, Usama al Kini, who masterminded the Marriott attack, was subsequently killed in a US Predator attack in South Wazirstan on New Year’s Day, 2009.14

**Recent Developments**

After the Marriott strike in Islamabad, there was a hiatus in attacks between October 2008 and January 2009 as the Pakistani Taliban were keen to pave the way for a peace agreement, which they and the Pakistani government signed in February 2009. Nonetheless, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi resumed attacks. Furthermore, the Taliban exploited the period of peace to advance from FATA to the adjacent areas and strength their writ, especially in Swat. After the peace agreement failed to work, Swat reemerged as a key battle field in April 2009. Outside FATA, most of the attacks were in the adjacent areas, including in NWFP. Despite security...
measures, there were also attacks in other parts of mainland Pakistan.15

- **February 5, 2009:** At least 24 people are killed in a suspected suicide bombing near Shi’ite mosque in Dera Ghazi Khan, central Pakistan.

- **March 3, 2009:** Gunmen attack a bus carrying Sri Lanka’s cricket team outside a Lahore stadium, killing seven people, including six policemen and a driver, and wounding six of the cricketers and a British coach.

- **March 30, 2009:** Militants armed with guns and grenades storm a police training centre in Lahore killing eight recruits, wounding scores and holding off police and troops for eight hours. The attack is claimed by Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud. Four militants are killed and three arrested.

- **April 5, 2009:** A suicide bomber blows himself up in a religious centre for minority Shi’ite Muslims in Chakwal in central Pakistan. At least 17 people are killed and about 11 seriously wounded. The attack comes a day after a suicide attack in Islamabad killed eight paramilitary soldiers.

- **May 11, 2009:** Ten people are killed and more than a dozen wounded in a suicide car bomb attack on a security checkpoint near Peshawar.

- **May 16, 2009:** Car packed with mortar bombs blows up in the northwestern city of Peshawar, killing 11 people, including four children passing in a school bus.

- **May 27, 2009:** Gunmen attack a police headquarters in the Pakistani city of Lahore, setting off a car-bomb that killed at least 24 people.

- **May 28, 2009:** Two bombs explode in a market in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar, killing six people.

- **June 9, 2009:** The Pakistani Taliban attack the Pearl Continental Hotel in Peshawar with guns and a truck bomb killing five people including a U.N. worker.

**The Evolving Threat**

SADLY, THE TERRORIST attacks in Pakistan, both tribal and mainland, polarized Pakistani society. Many believed that Pakistan was suffering because it was fighting America’s war. Most living in mainland Pakistan appeared unconcerned about the developments in tribal Pakistan. Until the Pakistani Taliban increased strikes in mainland Pakistan in 2008, the Pakistani government acted as if it was immune to the attacks in tribal Pakistan. Furthermore, those living in tribal Pakistan perceive that they are treated like “step children.” To really hurt Pakistan, the Pakistani Taliban became aware that it must hit inside Pakistan’s mainland. In order for them to operate effectively in the interior, the leadership of the Pakistani Taliban realized that it should strengthen existing ties and build new relationships with mainland groups. In addition to co-opting Lashkar-e-jhangvi, the Pakistani Taliban realized that it had to cultivate other extremist groups or individuals. Having failed in Sindh, notably in Karachi, the Taliban is now moving in that direction, especially in Punjab. The attack on the Sri Lankan team in Lahore in March and the attack on the Marriott, Islamabad in October 2008 demonstrated the links between the Pakistani Taliban and mainland groups. On 27 June 2009 Pakistan’s Interior Minister, Rehman Malik expressed apprehensions that all those terrorists who fled from Waziristan or Swat might take refuge in south Punjab.16 The attack on the Sri Lankan team in Lahore in March and the attack on the Marriott, Islamabad in October 2008 demonstrated the links between the Pakistani Taliban and mainland groups. On 27 June 2009 Pakistan’s Interior Minister, Rehman Malik expressed apprehensions that all those terrorists who fled from Waziristan or Swat might take refuge in south Punjab.17 Today, a group by the name of Punjabi Taliban operates side by side with Pakistani Taliban in FATA. The links between groups in tribal Pakistan and groups in mainland Pakistan, notably in Punjab, is becoming apparent.

With mounting pressure on tribal Pakistan, how best can Pakistan protect its mainland, where the bulk of the population lives? The best example comes from Karachi,18 where outstanding leadership by Dr. Suhaib Suddle, the Sindh police’s former Inspector General, and a brilliant team of counter terror

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15 Global Pathfinder II, the Database of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, Singapore, June 2009.


17 “South Punjab may be next Swat: Malik”, Daily Times, Lahore, 27 June 2009

18 The city of Karachi poses many non-security and security challenges. Pakistan’s “southern urban jungle” is not a designed city. Its setting is not pre-planned. Poorly regulated, Karachi has no mass transit. Karachi is burdened with an addition of 600 new vehicles every day. Nonetheless, the teeming city is flourishing. The contribution of the private sector to the economy of Karachi and to the rest of Pakistan is immense. Its overground and an underground infrastructure is both chaotic and vibrant. Despite political instability, there has been significant international, regional and national investment in Pakistan including in Karachi. With the ports of Karachi and Gwardar, a motorway is been built linking Central Asia, China and South Asia, that will be completed at the end of 2009. If the threat of extremism and terrorism can be contained, not only Karachi and Pakistan but the whole region will grow at an unprecedented pace. A trend setter from terrorism to industry and fashion and terrorism, Karachi is a dynamic and vital in its many facets. Due to globalization, especially due to the influx of migrant and diaspora communities, Karachi is the most vibrant city of Pakistan. A city of diverse ethnic and religious communities with many political orientations and allegiances, governing Karachi is a complex challenge.
ism professionals were able to dismantle the threat groups and their support infrastructure. If the Karachi model can be replicated in Punjab and elsewhere in mainland Pakistan, the increasing number of attacks in Lahore and other areas of Punjab, as well as in the rest of Pakistan, can be reversed. The megacity of Karachi presents a complex and a dynamic urban, political, socio-economic, and security environment. Karachi is also the economic hub of Pakistan. While Islamabad is its political capital, Karachi is Pakistan’s commercial and financial city. The nation’s only port, Karachi is the lifeline both for Pakistan and landlocked Afghanistan. Between 80-90% of NATO and other forces in Afghanistan are supplied through Karachi’s ports. Domestic and international trade and commerce boosted the economy of Karachi, but also spawned an underworld, aided by its location on the cross roads linking Asia to the Middle East. The organized and low-level crime experienced in Karachi is diverse in range. It is the most important transit point for Afghan and Pakistan heroin, the highest grade of heroin with the greatest demand in the Western world. The underground economy of smuggled goods that penetrates Afghanistan and Pakistan starts in Karachi.

Today, the crime-ridden cosmopolitan city of Karachi faces an unprecedented terrorist threat. Pakistan has become the third-highest victim of suicide attacks, the most lethal form of terrorism. After Iraq and Afghanistan, Pakistan experienced the highest number of suicide attacks in 2007. The city of Karachi is suffering from a wave of suicide attacks that begin in 2002. Suicide operations in Karachi were introduced in Karachi by the very same al-Qaeda cell led by Khalid Sheikh Mohamed that masterminded the September 11 attacks. After relocating from Afghanistan to Pakistan, al-Qaeda was able to build a secret infrastructure and operate in Karachi. Working with like-minded groups in Karachi, al-Qaeda mounted the first two vehicle-borne suicide attacks in Karachi. The 2002 attacks in front of the Sheraton Hotel and the US Consulate in Karachi were the first suicide attacks in Pakistan after 9/11. Similarly, before beheading was introduced in FATA in Pakistan and Iraq, Daniel Pearl was beheaded by an al-Qaeda cell collaborating with a Pakistani group. Even the targeted assassination of leaders—the first two attempts against President Pervez Musharraf and the initial one against presidential candidate Benazir Bhutto—took place in Karachi.

### The Contemporary Terrorist Threat:

Extremism and its vicious byproduct, terrorism, in Pakistan is not a new phenomenon. However, terrorism assumed a serious dimension in Pakistan particularly after 9/11. Within two decades, Pakistan became a frontline state in the war in Afghanistan, first to defeat the Soviets and then to defeat the Afghan Taliban and al-Qaeda.

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**SECTARIAN KILLINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SHIA</th>
<th>SUNNI</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUICIDE BOMBING IN SINDH FROM 2002 TO 2007**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Total Suicide Bombings</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Injured</td>
<td>772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Cases Detected</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Cases Un-Detected</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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19 The 10th biggest city in the world, the population of Karachi is bigger than the populations of 100 countries of the world. About 18-20 million people live, visit, and work in Karachi, Pakistan’s premier metropolis. Called mini-Pakistan, Karachi is a microcosm of Pakistan. All the ethnic communities of Pakistan have established a presence in Karachi. While 50% are Mohajirs, 25% Sindhi, 15% Pathans (both from NWFP and refugees from Afghanistan), 10% Punjabi, and less than 5% are Baluchis. From Pakistan, migrants came from NWFP, Baluchistan, Punjab both to Karachi and to interior Sindh. As the hub of commerce and industry of Pakistan, Karachi attracted people from the hinterland of Pakistan and its neighborhood. As ethnic and religious leaders seeking power struggle to maintain uniformity, the diversity makes Karachi the melting pot of Pakistan.


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The developments in Pakistan were driven not only by domestic but international compulsions. Karachi was not an exception. However, the ethnic and religious complexities in Pakistan contributed to its threat landscape. Even prior to al-Qaeda’s attacks on America’s iconic landmarks on September 11, 2001, Pakistan experienced serious sectarian terrorism from the mid 1990’s to 2001. However, the threat to Karachi grew significantly after 9/11. Shia-Sunni attacks there took a toll of 376 lives from 1994 to 2001.

While al-Qaeda and the Taliban supported the Sunni groups, Shia groups received simultaneous support from Iran. The principal actors were Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (Sunni groups) and Sipah-e-Muhammad Pakistan (a Shia group). Sectarian terrorism remained unabated, even after 9/11, resulting in the loss of 245 lives between 2001 and 2007. Due to intelligence-led operations and community policing, known terrorists and their supporters were arrested and the threat was reduced. (See figure 1)

After Pakistan assisted the US-led coalition in its campaign, it suffered from suicide terrorism. The first vehicle-borne suicide bombing in Pakistan took place in Karachi in 2002. A suicide bomber belonging to Harkat-ul-Jehad-e-Islami (HuJI) and operating under the banner of Harkat-ul-Mujahidin Al-Aalmi (HuMA), rammed his explosive-laden car in the side of a bus carrying French technicians in front of the Sheraton Hotel on May 08, 2002. HuMA, a breakaway faction of HuJI, is a group associated with al-Qaeda. HuMA mounted another vehicle-borne suicide attack on the US Consulate in Karachi on June 14, 2002. Pakistan’s main port city witnessed nine suicide bombings between 2002 and 2007 which killed 274 and maimed or injured an additional 772. (See figure 2)

Three out of nine suicide bombings were vehicle-borne suicide bombings. In the other cases, the suicide bombers either used explosive-laden briefcases, or belts and vests. (See figure 3)

In the first phase, the targets of the suicide bombers ranged from US and its European allies, Shia places of worship and religious gatherings, and prominent political and religious leaders. Of nine suicide bombing in Karachi, the police identified the perpetrators and masterminds in eight cases. Some of those orchestrators have been arrested and killed, or are currently being hunted. The terrorist groups responsible originated in Sindh, elsewhere in Pakistan, and increasingly in the country’s tribal areas. There were a few foreign terrorist groups, such as al-Qaeda. (See figure 4)

Several additional noteworthy cases of terrorism occurred between 2002 and 2008. Perhaps most well-known was the kidnapping and killing of Daniel Pearl, the first American victim of terrorism after 9-11. There were also two abortive at-

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### DETAILS OF SUICIDE BOMBINGS FROM 2002 TO 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. #</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Killed</th>
<th>Inj:</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Modus Operandi</th>
<th>Detected/Undetected</th>
<th>Group Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>08.05.02</td>
<td>Sheraton Hotel</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Foreign Experts</td>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>Detected</td>
<td>HUMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.06.02</td>
<td>American Consulate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>US Consulate</td>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>Detected</td>
<td>HUMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>07.05.04</td>
<td>Hydi Masjid</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Shia Masjid</td>
<td>Briefcase</td>
<td>Detected</td>
<td>SSP/LJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>31.05.04</td>
<td>Imam Bargah Ali Raza</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Shia Masjid/Imambargah</td>
<td>Briefcase</td>
<td>Detected</td>
<td>SSP/LJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30.05.05</td>
<td>Madina Tul Ilm</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Shia Masjid</td>
<td>Briefcase</td>
<td>Detected</td>
<td>LJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>02.03.06</td>
<td>US Consulate jeep</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>US Diplomat</td>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>Detected</td>
<td>LJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.04.06</td>
<td>Nishter Park</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Brelvi Religious gathering</td>
<td>Vest</td>
<td>Detected</td>
<td>LJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.07.06</td>
<td>Allama Hassan Turabi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>Shia Religious Leader</td>
<td>Vest</td>
<td>Detected</td>
<td>SSP/LJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19.10.07</td>
<td>Karachi</td>
<td>146*</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>Prominent PPP leadership</td>
<td>Belt/Vest</td>
<td>Undetected</td>
<td>Suspected to be Pakistan Taliban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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22 Report on Terrorism in Sindh, CID Karachi, April 2008
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
The city has a Pashtun population (about 4 million) larger than that found in Peshawar (about 3 million) and there is considerable contact, both in terms of communication and movement, between FATA and Karachi. When an individual leaves FATA through South Waziristan, the first stop is Dera Ismail Khan and thereafter the main road leads to Karachi. Even from Swat, the route leads to Karachi. Especially due to the military operations in Waziristan, the tribal population has been displaced. While the neighboring agencies received most of the displaced, Karachi was the next largest recipient.

The Pakistani military—operating under US pressure—has used excessive force, thereby militarizing a segment of the Mehsuds. This development has led both to internal displacement and refugee flows, as well as recruits to support the insurgency. An astute observer of the escalating insurrection, Dost Ali of the Police in Karachi said: “Whenever you try to solve political problems through force, you face violence. The degree of force, determines degree of violence. The stronger you are, you will use more force. Over time, the weak will win. Everybody who cooperates becomes a friend.” The spillover effect has been profound. Since 2007, Karachi and the rest of Pakistan have faced a significant threat from FATA. Today, extremist and terrorist propaganda (both videos and literature) from FATA are found in Karachi. The most widely used book by the jihadists titled, “The benefits of fizzle jihad” can be found in Karachi. It is authored by Mufti Abu Bashar Khasmi (a likely alias), and purportedly published in Dhaka, Bangladesh. In addition to using Karachi to raise funds and recruit, the Pakistan Taliban and al-Qaeda in tribal Pakistan are launching operations directly and through like-minded Pakistani groups in the mainland to hit targets in Karachi. Over time, the threat to that city

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>NATURE OF INCIDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Daniel Pearl’s kidnapping and subsequent assassination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Attempt on life of Pervez Musharraf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Sheraton Hotel bomb blast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>US Consulate bomb blast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Bomb blast at 17 Shell petrol pumps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Firing on SUARCO bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Attack on Imamgah Ali Murtaza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Bomb blast in Masjid Hyderi (Suicide attack)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Bomb blast at Imamgah Ali Raza (Suicide attack)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Attack on corps commander’s convoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai murder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Suicide bomb attack on Imamgah Madina-Tul-IIm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Suicide bomb blast at US Consulate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Suicide bomb blast at Nishat Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Suicide attack on Allama Hassan Turabi at Karachi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Suicide attack on rally of Benazir Bhutto at Karachi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
from groups outside Karachi and Sindh is likely to grow. For instance, the Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) carried out more than 12 sabotage attacks on electric pylons/sui gas pipelines and railway lines in and around Karachi and interior Sindh in 2007 and 2008. Although Islamists terrorist groups present the greatest threat, the threat stems not only from politico-religious groups alone. In addition to BLA, an ethnonationalist terrorist group from Baluchistan operating in Karachi, MQM, another ethnonationalist group from Karachi, presents an enduring threat to Karachi. The on-going feud between MQM and Sunni Tehreek has thus far claimed several lives on both sides.

Terrorist groups in Karachi target frontline security personnel. As law enforcement and intelligence services continue to hunt terrorists and their supporters, they too face a continuing threat. In the last two weeks of March 2008, four police officials were killed in Karachi. Similarly, two Intelligence Bureau officials were killed in Karachi in the last week of March 2008. According to the Karachi Police,

“These two events seem to be deliberate attempt to spread disaffection and undermine morale of the law enforcing agencies as well as security agencies from acting effectively against anti state inimical forces. These incidents appear to be handiwork of the militant forces, who now feel emboldened due to transitory period.” (See figure 5)

**The Emerging Threat:**

**Events in Karachi** are an indicator of likely future developments. Before the assassination of former prime minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto in Islamabad on December 27, 2007, she narrowly escaped an assassination attempt in Karachi. Of 14 terrorist incidents that took place in Sindh province in 2007, this was the worst. The twin suicide attacks on Benazir Bhutto’s welcome rally at Karsaz on October 18/19, 2007 caused the most fatalities in a single terrorist incident in Pakistan, with 130 dead and 403 injured.31 Another 16 remain missing and presumed dead, bringing the total number of fatalities to 146. Police officials account for six of the dead and 29 of the injured. Most of the fatalities and injuries were caused by steel pellets emanating from the two blasts. At 00:10 hrs on October 19, 2007, as the container truck carrying Bhutto crossed Karsaz Flyover, the first blast took place on the left side of the container truck. The container truck was located between Police Mobile No. SP-6510 and a private vehicle, AFR-2007 Mini Pajero.32 The brunt of the blast was absorbed by Police Mobile No. SP-6510, thus preventing serious damage to the truck. The 1st blast also damaged the Santro car No. AKR-477 and Police Mobile SP-6501.33 After a lapse of about 1 minute, the second blast took place. Whereas the first blast was of lesser intensity, the second occurred with a much higher force and caused maximum damage. (See figure 6)

The Karachi Police responded swiftly. The deputy inspector general (DIG) in charge of investigations, Karachi, was appointed to head-up the investigation, being replaced later by DIG CID. The crime scene was thoroughly inspected by the investigation team duly assisted by the Bomb Disposal Unit of the Special Branch. Circumstantial evidence and other material evidence collected ruled out the possibility of explosives having been installed in any of the vehicles, since both were burned, with no evidence of explosion found. Reports by the Bomb Disposal Unit, SIG of FIA, and FSL, material evidence collected from scene of crime, video footage, and eye witness accounts demonstrates that the explosions were the result of twin suicide bombings. This conclusion is also supported by FIA’s SIG and other intelligence agencies.

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31 Report on Terrorism in Sindh, CID Karachi, April 2008
32 Soon after the incident a case FIR No. 183/2007 u/s 302/324/417/34 3/4 Exp: 7-ATA dated 19.10.2007 was registered by the SHO, PS Bahadurabad, Karachi on behalf of the State.
33 Report on Terrorism in Sindh, CID Karachi, April 2008
34 Ibid.
A striker sleeve was recovered from the crime scene which is specifically used by suicide bombers as a manual triggering mechanism to detonate explosive jackets. Similar striker sleeve of the same batch number were recovered in 10 previous suicide bomb blasts, as per analysis of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and further confirmed by NWFP police. (See figure 7)

During the course of the investigation, the police were able to recover important material from the crime scene. That material included two heads from the scene, one with the face intact along with some parts of the upper torso, and the other in pieces, which was re-constructed with the assistance of doctors. Both severed heads have been given wide publicity by the media. A reward of Rs.5 million has also been widely publicized by the government of Sindh for providing information leading to the arrest of the perpetrators. No claimant to date has, so far, identified the two severed heads. In light of previous suicide bombings in Karachi, the police short-listed Pakistan Taliban (Baituallah Mahsud Group), al-Qaeda (Qari Zafar Group) (involved in the 2001 incident), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (involved in the 2005 suicide incidents), Harkat-ul-Mujahideen Al-Aalmi (involved in the 2002 suicide incidents), and hostile foreign agencies / miscellaneous groups. (See figure 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.#</th>
<th>Incident Date</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Explosive/Weapons Used</th>
<th>Likely Target</th>
<th>Dead</th>
<th>Injured</th>
<th>Motive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>27-01-2007</td>
<td>Peshawar</td>
<td>Suicide Bomber</td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Political/Jihadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>29-01-2007</td>
<td>D.I. Khan</td>
<td>Suicide Bomber</td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Political/Jihadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18-02-2007</td>
<td>Quetta</td>
<td>Suicide Bomber</td>
<td>Govt. Employee</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>28-02-2007</td>
<td>Charsadda</td>
<td>Suicide Bomber</td>
<td>Political Leader</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Political/Jihadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14-05-2007</td>
<td>Peshawar</td>
<td>Suicide Bomber</td>
<td>General Public</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Political/Jihadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15-07-2007</td>
<td>D.I. Khan</td>
<td>Suicide Bomber</td>
<td>Frontier Corps (FC)/Security Force</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Political/Jihadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>19-07-2007</td>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>Suicide Bomber</td>
<td>FC/Security Force</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Political/Jihadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>Suicide Bomber</td>
<td>FC/Security Force</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Political/Jihadi</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>04-09-2007</td>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>Suicide Bomber</td>
<td>FC/Security Force</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Political/Jihadi</td>
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<td>11-09-2007</td>
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<td>Gen. Public</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>19-10-2007</td>
<td>Karachi</td>
<td>Suicide Bomber</td>
<td>Political Leader</td>
<td>117</td>
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<td>Political/Jihadi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 292 636
arrested Qari Saifullah Akhtar, the leader of HuJI, after he was released by CID Punjab on March 13, 2008.\footnote{DIG Saud, April 2008} A native of South Waziristan, Qari Saifullah Akhtar formed HuJI in Afghanistan to fight the Soviets, but subsequently established links with Al Qaeda, the Taliban and several Pakistani groups. Akhtar was thoroughly interrogated by JIT, which is composed of members of all the security and intelligence agencies and law enforcement authorities.\footnote{Ibid.} The JIT, after interrogating Akhtar in depth during his remand period of 14 days, could not establish his direct or indirect involvement in the Karsaz incident.\footnote{Ibid.} As Bhutto was subsequently killed in Islamabad, uncovering the identity of the masterminds of the attempt there remains of paramount significance for Pakistan. Working with other branches of government, the Sindh police assigned the highest priority to identify the perpetrators behind the Bhutto assassination.

Activities of several other terrorist groups which were otherwise unknown, came to the forefront in 2008. The police were able to dismantle three such terrorist groups and cells planning to mount attacks in Karachi and arrested seven members of Tehreek Islami Lashkar-e-Muhammadi. The hitherto unknown group, led by Wajahat, killed 14 persons between 2002 and 2007. The victims belonged to minority communities—Christians and Ahmadi, prominent businessmen, and members of an NGO. A large number of explosives were also recovered which the group had intended to use for a spectacular event. Immediately before 9/10th Muharram, the police, with a timely lead from the Federal Security Agency, were able to arrest a cell composed of five terrorists. They had planned to carry out a massacre of the Shia community on the eve of 9/10th Muharram by mixing cyanide in the sabeels installed on the route of the main Shia procession. The group from which the substantial explosives were recovered, had also intended to target sensitive military installations/cantonments. Karachi police, acting on a secret tip, raided a hideout on January 29, 2008, where they encountered fierce resistance from Judnullah. A heavily-armed and well entrenched terrorist group, Judnullah killed two and also injured two police officials. During the prolonged encounter, they were able to kill and arrest Judnullah members.\footnote{Report on Terrorism in Sindh, CID Karachi, April 2008. Police killed (i) Junaid Farooqui @ Ibrahim s/o Khalilullah (ii) Yaqoob @ Abdulla s/o Muhammad Hanif and (iii) Tayyab Dad @ Kashif s/o Sami Dad and arrested (i) Muhammad Qasim Toori @ Hamza (ii) Abid @ Ali and (iii) Danish @ Talah.} They also recovered huge quantity of heavy weapons and explosives which the terrorists wanted to use in Karachi. Members of this group were involved in an attack on a convoy of Corps Commander in 2004. Furthermore, Judnullah engaged in bank robberies in 2007 in Karachi to fund the Pakistani Taliban. The US Consulate, Nishtar Park blasts, and the Karsaz incidents, indubitably indicate the prowess of al-Qaeda, the Pakistani Taliban, and its affiliates in the mainland to undertake large-scale operations. Despite the disruption of local terrorist cells, mainland Pakistan will continue to experience periodic attacks of varying scale, especially by groups operating out of FATA.

**Conclusion**

**S** temming from developments in Pakistan and globally, twin security threats affect Pakistan. First, Pakistan’s support for the US fight against terrorism and the insurgency in Afghanistan and tribal Pakistan itself are all having an impact on the security of mainland Pakistan. Second, the Shia and Sunni rivalry within Pakistan and in the Middle East at large is affecting Pakistan. Although the Shia-Sunni threat is believed to have plateaued, it has not. When hunted by the police in mainland Pakistan, the Sunni terrorists and extremists that either supported or attacked the Shia relocated to tribal Pakistan. There were other non-sectarian terrorists from Sindh that joined or linked up with al-Qaeda, the Pakistani Taliban, and Punjabi Taliban in tribal Pakistan. These individuals and groups from Karachi are now fighting the Pakistani security forces in FATA and coalition forces in Afghanistan, presenting a long term threat to the rest of Pakistan. Urdu-speaking Pakistanis from Sindh and a smaller percentage of Sindhis have united with Punjabis and Seraikis to fight both coalition forces and the Pakistani military under the banner of Punjabi Taliban.\footnote{Punjabi Taliban is the term they were identified by the Pakistani Taliban. However, the constituent groups of Punjabi Taliban called themselves mujahidin. Interview, Adnan Ali, Pakistani researcher, ICVPTR, August 16, 2008} This non-Pashtu Taliban grouping in FATA was organized by Abdul Rahman, a Punjabi. After crossing into South Waziristan from Afghanistan after fighting the coalition forces in Paktika, Abdul Rahim was killed (along with a few Arabs) in Bahgar, Angooroa on August 14, 2008. After being indoctrinated in global jihad and learning tradecraft, the Sindhi and Urdu speaking Pakistanis from Sindh are likely to return to Karachi to lead and staff terrorist and extremist groups and carry out the fight in their city—Karachi.

Rather than a primary generator of violence, mainland Pakistan is more a victim of violence. Although there will always be infrequent attacks in the mainland, with good police work, the threat to cities from the spillover of the insurgency in FATA and Afghanistan and global developments can be managed. Contradictory to popular belief, mainland Pakistan is not an exporter of violence, but instead, a reluctant importer. \footnote{17}
AQIM Expansion Throughout North Africa

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), through its violent activity in countries in North Africa and its propaganda aimed at enemies and Muslims abroad, has demonstrated its expanded presence outside of Algeria. The group’s offensive operations, including suicide bombings, strikes against employees and facilities of foreign corporations, and its taking of foreign prisoners, have also become prevalent since its joining al-Qaeda officially in January, 2007. As if to highlight the group’s expanding influence, AQIM most recently took credit for killing 28 Malian soldiers in northern Mali in a preemptive strike on July 4, 2009 and threatened Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure to expect more attacks should he continue to lead his military against the mujahideen.1 Nearly one week prior, AQIM fighters shot to death an American aid worker, Christopher Ervin Leggett, in Nouakchott, Mauritania. These two examples underscore what has become a burgeoning threat in the region: a group empowered by its joining al-Qaeda and the global jihad network and moving a conflict within Algerian borders to encompass the entirety of North Africa and beyond.

Since the announcement that the group had joined al-Qaeda in January 2007, AQIM, formerly known as the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC), has increasingly launched operations outside its home country of Algeria, striking enemy targets in Mauritania and kidnapping foreign tourists in Niger and Tunisia. Prior to its move under the banner of al-Qaeda, the group had already launched an attack outside Algeria, killing Mauritanian soldiers in northeast Mauritania in June 2005. Between that attack and its joining al-Qaeda, the GSPC did not publicly claim another operation outside Algeria. However, beginning in January 2007, and continuing through July 2009, AQIM has claimed four attacks in Mauritania: a strike on Mauritanian soldiers in Ghalaweya on December 26, 2007, killing 40 soldiers; a strike on the Israeli embassy in Nouakchott on February 1, 2008, killing three French nationals and hitting an “undetermined amount” of Jews and guards; a raid in Zouerate on September 14, 2008, killing 12 soldiers; and the murder of Christopher Ervin Legget in Nouakchott on June 24.

In addition to demonstrating its presence in Mauritania, AQIM has also claimed activity in Mali, Niger, and Tunisia. On March 10, 2008, AQIM claimed that its fighters kidnapped two Austrian tourists in Tunisia, Wolfgang Ebner and Andrea Kloiber, on February 14, 2008, killing 12 soldiers; and the strike on the Israeli embassy in Nouakchott on February 1, 2008, killing three French nationals and hitting an “undetermined amount” of Jews and guards; a raid in Zouerate on September 14, 2008, killing 12 soldiers; and the murder of Christopher Ervin Legget in Nouakchott on June 24.

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In addition to widening the breadth of attacks across North Africa, AQIM has made sure to address Muslims outside of Algeria to convince them of al-Qaeda’s viewpoint and ideology. Abu Musab Abdul Wadud, the leader of AQIM, has repeatedly called upon Muslims in North

Africa to participate in jihad, explaining to them that the ruling regimes in their countries have transgressed against their rights and their religion. For example, in a speech released on jihadist forums on September 21, 2008, Wadud addressed circumstances and events in Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia, and incited the Muslim residents in these countries to participate in jihad. He said:

“We address this call to the general public in [North Africa], and to their elite, their women and their men, to their youth and their elderly, to their preachers and their intellectuals, and to all their categories. I call them to listen to the word of Islam, because we have no salvation but in Islam, and we have no power but in Islam. O grandchildren of ‘Uqba and Tariq, Yusuf bin Tashfine, Mu’iz bin Badis, Abdul Karim al-Khattabi, and Umar al-Mukhtar, come from your heedlessness, come from your heedlessness and put your hands into the hands of your mujahideen brothers in al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.”

Wadud also individually called upon Muslims in Mauritania and Morocco to participate in jihad in separate messages, citing current events in their countries as evidence of the illegitimacy of their leaders and these leaders’ hostility to Islam. Precipitated by a Moroccan security official allegedly beating a Moroccan woman in front of Oukacha prison, on June 4, Wadud addressed a message to Muslims in Morocco, urging them to take action against the Moroccan regime. He also stated that AQIM will deploy every “precious and dear effort” to defend the honor of Muslim women, and this revenge will come “sooner or later.” On August 10, Wadud urged jihad in Mauritania, arguing that the military junta that assumed leadership, particularly Abu Yahya al-Libi, who in a speech released on June 22, 2009, urged Muslims in North Africa to of achieve Shariah-based governance. While AQIM has looked to expand its activity in North Africa, the group has not neglected its northern neighbor of Europe. Looking beyond the African continent, Abu Musab Abdul Wadud threatened France amidst French President Nicolas Sarkozy seeking to ban Muslim women from wearing the niqab (veil) and burqa (dress) in France. In a statement dated June 28, Wadud observed the assault on traditional clothing for Muslim women as a “flagrant war” on Muslim women and Islam. He added that the controversy is compounded by French women appearing scantily dressed in Algeria and North Africa, defying Islamic customs and traditions. This, he said, is “extremism” and “racism.” Wadud threatened:

“As for us – the mujahideen in al-Qaeda Organization in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb – we promised Allah that we will not remain silent to such provocations and injustices. We will take revenge for the honors of our daughters and sisters against France and against its interests by every means at our disposal, in every place that we are able to reach, and whenever the opportunity is available to us, until France ceases her injustice and thoughtlessness and ends her hostility and aggression.”

In terms of both military activity and propaganda, AQIM has spread throughout North Africa and made the region another battlefield in the global jihad waged by al-Qaeda and its supporters. AQIM proudly highlights its suicide bombers and fighters who migrated from other North African states to Algeria, and calls upon Muslims in those states to follow the departed into war against what they view as “apostate” regimes and “Crusader allies.” This drive is supported by al-Qaeda leadership, particularly Abu Yahya al-Libi, who in a speech released on June 22, 2009, urged Muslims in North Africa to offer support to their brethren in Algeria and particularly those in AQIM. North African Muslims, he stated, should either do jihad in Algeria or in their own country to empower Islam and achieve Shariah-based governance.

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7 SITE Intelligence Group, “AQIM Audio Interview with Political Committee Head,” 4 May 2009.
Al-Qaeda Has Sent You A Friend Request: Terrors Using Online Social Networking

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The School of International Studies, American University, Washington, DC
Senior Advisor, SITE

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The worldwide dissemination of information and images on the Internet during the 2009 Iranian election protests demonstrated the galvanizing and communicative prowess of online social networks. As a result of strict government censorship, websites like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter became primary sources for up-to-date news. Despite stringent government scrutiny, Iranian civilians made powerful cell phone images, first-hand accounts and evocative commentary available to the world by signing onto message boards and video sharing sites. However, grassroots groups and political opposition parties are not the only ones to be making use of the unifying capacities and pervasiveness of social networks. They are also exploited for much more sinister purposes.

The growing presence of modern terrorism on the Internet is at the nexus of two key trends: the democratization of communications driven by user-generated content on the Internet, and the growing awareness by modern terrorists of the potential use of the Internet for their purposes. The Internet has long been a favorite tool for terrorists.1 Terrorists use the World Wide Web to expand the reach of their propaganda to a global audience, to recruit adherents, to communicate with international supporters and ethnic diasporas, to solicit donations, and to foster public awareness and sympathy for their causes. In addition to launching their own websites, terrorists can harness the interactive capabilities of chat rooms, instant messenger, blogs, video-sharing websites, and self-determined online communities and social networks. These forums act as a personal firewall to safeguard the identities of those who participate, and they offer surfers easy access to terrorist material, to ask questions, and even to contribute and aid the cyber jihad.


Terrorist Chat Rooms and Forums

Chat rooms and electronic forums enable terrorist groups to communicate with members and supporters all over the world, to recruit new followers and to share information at little risk of identification by authorities. The free chat room service PalTalk, which includes voice and video capabilities, has become particularly popular with terrorist cells. In one PalTalk chat room, British Islamic militants were found to have set up support forums for the killed leader of the insurgents in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. In a separate chat room, Arabic-speaking users are sharing personal experiences of fighting Arab-Afghans. In another, relatives of Iraqi insurgents were praising the “martyrdom” of the terrorists. In addition to being used to generate support, chat rooms are used to share tactical information. Jihadist message boards and chat rooms have been known to have “experts” directly answer questions about how to mix poisons for chemical attacks, how to ambush soldiers, how to carry out suicide attacks, and how to hack into computer systems. One chat room on the PalTalk service (with a name that is slightly altered each time but still identifiable), has been routinely advertised on jihadi web forums and has been used on a daily basis to post the...
links for al-Qaeda propaganda videos and terrorist instruction manuals.\(^2\) The forums Shamoukh al-Islam, Mujahideen, and al-Fallujah are especially popular among terrorist cells, and new recruits are encouraged to refer to the sites to read the jihadist literature. These chat rooms also aim to convince prospective members to join or to stage personal suicide attacks.

According to SITE’s special report on Western Jihadist Forums,\(^3\) during 2009 several notable technical changes occurred in many of the jihadist forums. Thus, for example, the long offline, prominent English-language jihadist forum, al-Firdaws English, returned on May 4, 2009. The newly resurrected al-Firdaws English forum is now open to the public, rather than being password-protected, as before. Permitting non-members to view discussion and content on the forum is a significant departure for the al-Firdaws style, as previous iterations of the forum had been both completely password-protected and not open to new membership. The forum administration’s decision to open the forum to public observation suggests that they may envision the forum containing less sensitive information in the future. Despite allowing forum visitors to access threads and read content, al-Firdaws English remains closed to new and prospective members.

### Terrorist Twitters

A recent SITE report on jihad website activities (June 2009) highlights the role of Twitter.\(^4\) The al-Firdaws English jihadist forum is unique in utilizing Twitter while the site was offline as a way to keep members apprised of the administration’s progress towards bringing the forum back online. A year later, in May 2010, the administration announced on the forum’s Twitter account a week before the site’s actual return that the forum had been restored.\(^5\)

According to SITE’s report, despite the utility of Twitter, forum members continued to be wary of social networking sites such as Facebook. In response to a forum member’s suggestion to become friends on Facebook, members of the Ansar al-Mujahideen jihadist forum envisioned such a network as a danger to Western jihadists. In a thread begun on May 4, 2009, Ansar al-Mujahideen members attempted to dissuade a member (called “Islamic Jihad union”) from connecting with other jihadist supporters on Facebook. Soon, other Ansar al-Mujahideen participants were warning against utilizing Facebook. Several forum members opined that the risks of having their real identity tied to their online personas outweighed the potential gains from networking with other jihadist supporters.

### Social Networking

Popular social networking websites are another means of attracting potential members and followers. These types of virtual communities are growing increas-

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\(^5\) InSITE: Western Jihadist Forums, op. cit.

\(^6\) http://twitter.com/alfirdaws
ingly popular all over the world, especially among younger demographics. The youth are especially targeted for recruitment purposes by jihadist terrorist groups. Predominately Western online communities like Facebook are being used more and more by terrorist groups and their sympathizers. Social networking websites allow terrorists to disseminate propaganda to an impressionable age bracket that might empathize with their cause and possibly agree to join their ranks. Many users join interest groups that may help terrorists target users whom they might be able to manipulate. Many social networking users accept people as friends whether they know them or not, thereby giving perfect strangers access to personal information and photos; some even communicate with the strangers and establish virtual friendships.

Terrorists also apply the narrowcasting strategy to social networking sites as well. The name, accompanying default image, and information on a group message board are all tailored to fit the profile of a particular social group. The groups also provide terrorists with a list of predisposed recruits or sympathizers. In the same way that marketing groups can view a member’s information to decide which products to target to your webpage, terrorist groups can view people’s profiles to decide whom they are going to target and how they should configure the message.

Yet, terrorists are well aware of the risks involved. A member of a jihadi forum in English issued a warning, reminding readers that a Facebook network would allow security agencies to trace entire groups of jihadists, arguing:

Don’t make a network in facebook...Then kuffar will know every friend you have or had in the past. They will know location, how you look, what you like, they will know everything! Join facebook if you want and use it to keep in touch with friends and brothers far away but not as a network.

As a strategy to distribute jihadist propaganda to a wide range of Muslims and overcome countermeasures, a jihadist posting suggests that administrators of jihadist forums and media organizations create e-mailing groups. This suggestion was posted on the al-Fallujah forum on March 16, 2009. The mailing group is patterned after the Ansar Mail Group, a jihadist media distributor that dispatched news of the mujahideen to users via e-mail. He suggests that other jihadists, too, create such groups in order to reach the largest possible number of users, and that they should remove any obstacle in the registration process that hinders distribution. To this end, the jihadist, in a later posting, provides instructions for creating groups on Google. Another forum participant, pleased with the suggestion, instructs how to create a user account on Yahoo, and adds that groups may be created on that service as well.

You Have a Friend Request: Facebook

Membership within the international Facebook community has boomed in recent years. Facebook is currently one of the world’s most popular social networking websites. Terrorists have taken note of its popularity and have set up profiles on the site. There are numerous Facebook groups declaring support for paramilitary and nationalist groups that the US government has designated as terrorist organizations, such as Hezbollah, Hamas, the Turkish Revolutionary People’s Liberation Army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The majority of these groups have open pages and anyone interested can read the information, look at the discussion boards, click on links to propaganda videos, and join the groups.

On one Facebook group page entitled, “Lets Break a Guinness Book World Record! 2010! The Largest Group on Facebook,” a young Tamil posted articles about the rape of Tamil girls by Sri Lankan Army soldiers. “These suicide cadres are the orphans who lost their beloved family in Srilanka’s bombings.... they decided to take revenge and its their choice,” the young Tamil wrote. “Mind it no one forced them. I lost my family in SL’S Bombs. I will join as a suicide cadre. Cos I’ve seen and still watching srlankan Army’s murders. [sic]” This topic discussion board was open for anyone on Facebook to read and comment on. The Facebook groups supporting terrorist organizations use effective marketing techniques to attract young users, like eye-catching photos and intriguing group descriptions. For example, there is one pro-Tamil Tigers Facebook group that uses an attractive ‘I heart TE’ logo, modeled after the familiar ‘I heart NY’ template.

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Deputy Director for Intelligence at the National Counterterrorism Center Andrew Liepman recently reported to Congress that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is tracking a few Somali-Americans from the Minneapolis area who were reportedly recruited for the purpose of starting a US terrorist cell of the Shabaab al-Mujahideen Movement through Facebook.10 As a result, the FBI is keeping a close eye on one Facebook user who posted a photo of a man wearing a black mask over his face and holding what appears to be the Qur’an in one hand and a grenade launcher in the other. Although some might argue that the aforementioned posting is probably in violation of Facebook’s terms of use, which bans posting “threatening,” “harassing,” or “hateful” messages, the FBI is finding it difficult to regulate terrorist activity on the Internet because of First Amendment rights issues. Compounding the issue is the fact that it is also nearly impossible to track down individuals involved in these sorts of instances because of the international nature of the websites. Social networking websites do not always have very identifiable information about users; all that is needed to register for the websites in an email address, with users often setting up their accounts with false names and details.

Terrorists can use these social networking sites to monitor military personnel. In 2008, the Canadian Defense Department and the British Secret Service (MI5) requested troops to remove personal details from social networking sites because of alleged monitoring by al-Qaeda operatives. US personnel are also warned about posting certain details or photos on their profile pages. Even if the information does not give details about the logistics of troop movements, it could potentially endanger the friends and relatives of the military and security personnel. Many soldiers unwittingly post detailed information about themselves, their careers, family members, date of birth, present locations, and photos of colleagues and weaponry. Canadian troops have been asked to exclude any information from their profiles that might even link them with the military. A report from the Lebanese capital of Beirut later that year stated that Hezbollah had been monitoring Facebook to find potentially sensitive information about Israeli military movements and intelligence that could be harmful to the national security of Israel. The report quoted an Israeli intelligence official saying that “Facebook is a major resource for terrorists, seeking to gather information on soldiers and IDF [Israel Defense Forces] units and the fear is soldiers might even unknowingly arrange to meet an Internet companion who in reality is a terrorist.”11

A group for supporters of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) and al-Qaeda have also been known to use Facebook.12 Members of al-Ekhlaaas, a currently offline al-Qaeda-affiliated forum, were notified about the group in a posting dated August 21, 2008. It briefly described the pictures found in this Facebook group, which include shots of Usama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and ISI mujahideen. One of the members commented on the utility of such a group: “These sites can be exploited to post our ideas and what we owe Allah to those who do not carry our ideology.”

**Facebook Invasions**

Noting the prevalent use of Facebook, jihadists suggested that it be used to strengthen jihadist media and reach a wider audience. A jihadist posting on the al-Fallujah forum on December 9, 2008, suggested the “YouTube Invasion.”13 He noted the “great success” thus far in publishing jihadist media on YouTube, and urged jihadists to maintain that campaign. Similar to his message regarding YouTube, he provided a synopsis of Facebook and its growth since its founding, noting the number of its users and broad reach. Images detailing the registration process, adding friends, and setting up groups, were also posted by this jihadist. Other forum participants posted words of praise for the idea and inquiries about the process.

Jihadists formed an online group aiming to “invade” Facebook. This group, calling itself “Knights of Support Invasion 2,” is comprised of seven brigades, each tasked with distributing and promoting Salafist doctrine and mujahideen propaganda.14 They issued a statement on jihadist forums on December 15, 2008 announcing their structure and overall mission. While “Support Invasion 1” refers to the “YouTube Invasion,” “Support Invasion 2” is the title given to the “Facebook Invasion,” which entails the use of the social networking site as a jihadist media device. The head of this invasion declared in a message posted on the al-Fallujah forum on March 17, 2009, that his group is joining the Jihadist Brigades to Invade the Internet.15 Thus, he argued, they will join the Jihadist Brigades’ intention to infiltrate Islamic forums and spread jihadist rhetoric until these forums become similar to popular jihadist forums.

The “Knights of Support Invasion 2” issued a message on jihadist forums on December 23, 2008 declaring their firmness and defiance to Facebook. They noted in their posting that the enemy has realized the danger that this “invasion” poses to their interests. Despite setbacks, they declare:

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12 SITE Intelligence Group, “ISI Supporters Group on Facebook”, 21 August, 2008
13 SITE Intelligence Group, “Jihadist Suggests Facebook Invasion”, 10 December, 2008
14 SITE Intelligence Group, “Structure Given to Groups within Facebook Invasion”, 16 December, 2008
15 SITE Intelligence Group, “Facebook Invasion Jihadists Join Internet Invasion Brigades”, 18 March, 2009
In a message posted on jihadist forums on February 1, 2009, jihadists involved in the “Facebook Invasion” bragged of their continued dissemination of propaganda on this popular platform and invited other users to participate with them. The message was posted by the leader of the “Support Invasion 2,” who informs that speeches from leaders of jihad on Gaza were distributed on several Facebook groups (Egyptian groups in particular), in addition to distributing the al-Qaeda video of Abu Talha al-Alamani (the German) to German groups, and other releases translated into English to English groups.

Finally, on April 22, 2009, the third stage of the invasion was declared, explaining how to fix errors discovered in prior stages. While prior attempts to create and maintain jihadist groups on Facebook, such as that by the “Knights of Support Invasion 2,” failed due to Facebook administrators deleting these groups, the third stage suggested several ways to overcome these obstacles. The user explaining the third stage, “Omar Abdul Hakim,” suggested how a jihadist can start a group and recruit members, such as by finding Muslims who share similar beliefs and interests and slowly introducing them to jihadist propaganda. He gives specific advice on how to communicate with Facebook users, providing a form letter that they may send, and also suggests steps to take while forming the group and what to do should the group be deleted, so as to resume activity.

**YouTube and TheyTube**

The uploading, downloading and viewing of video tapes and segments has become very popular on the Internet. YouTube was established in February 2005 as an online repository facilitating the sharing of such video content and claims to be the “world’s most popular online video community.”

A 2007 report from the Pew Internet and American Life Project put the percentage of US online video viewers using YouTube at 27%, ahead of all other video sharing sites. In the 18 to 29-year-old age groups, this leadership is even more pronounced, with 49% of US online video viewers using YouTube. In fact, CNNMoney reported that in January 2008 alone, nearly 79 million users worldwide viewed more than three billion YouTube videos.

Terrorist groups quickly realized the potential of this easily accessed platform for the dissemination of their propaganda and radicalization videos and praised the usefulness of this new online apparatus. Convicted terrorist Younis Tsouli (so-called “Irhabi 007”) even testified:

“A lot of the funding that the brothers are getting is coming because of the videos. Imagine how many have gone after seeing the videos. Imagine how many have become shahid [martyrs].”

In a November 2008 posting on the al-Fallujah forum, jihadists suggested a “YouTube Invasion” to support jihadist media and the administrators of al-Fajr-affiliated forums. The posting provides a synopsis of the YouTube site and its founding, and notes its use by US President-elect Barack Obama during his presidential campaign, and by others. YouTube is argued to be an alternative to television and a medium that allows for jihadists to reach massive, global audiences. The message even instructs how jihadists should cut mujahideen videos into ten-minute chunks, as per YouTube’s requirements, and upload them sequentially to the site.

Hezbollah, Hamas, the LTTE, and the Shinning Path of Peru all have propaganda videos on YouTube. One LTTE YouTube user has posted over 100 videos in 2009 alone. In 2008, Hamas allegedly launched its own video-sharing website, although the group denied ownership of the site. AqsaTube, in addition to choosing a similar name, was designed to look just like YouTube and even copied its logo. Once certain Internet providers refused to host the website, Hamas launched PaluTube and TubeZik. The Tamil Tigers have also launched TamilTube. These videos are not just aimed at Middle Eastern Muslim youth, as evidenced by the fact that more recent videos posted on these video-sharing websites are dubbed in English or have English subtitles.

A recent study conducted by Conway and McInerney analyzed the online supporters of jihad-promoting...
video content on YouTube, focusing on those posting and commenting upon martyr-promoting material from Iraq. The findings suggest that a majority are under 35 years of age and reside outside the region of the Middle East and North Africa, with the largest percentage of supporters located in the United States. As the researchers concluded:

“What is clearly evident however is that jihadist content is spreading far beyond traditional jihadiist websites or even dedicated forums to embrace, in particular, video sharing and social networking -- both hallmarks of Web 2.0 -- and thus extending their reach far beyond what may be conceived as their core support base in the Middle East and North Africa region to Diaspora populations, converts, and political sympathizers.”

**Conclusion**

Much of the original online terrorist content was unidirectional, text-based, in the form of traditional websites with a heavy reliance on text and messages posted on forums. However, technological advancements—particularly the increased availability of sophisticated, but cheap and easy to use video capturing hardware (e.g., hand-held digital video cameras, mobile telephones, etc.)—and interactive online networking platforms (e.g., Facebook) changed terrorist online communications. The global community created by social networks and interactive forums on the Internet is advancing cultural awareness and reconciliation efforts, but it is also advancing terrorists’ goals of sharing its extremist messages with global audiences. By using these online communities to its advantage, not only can terrorists promote global paranoia, share their messages with sympathizers, and obtain donations, they can also proliferate their ranks, thus creating more terrorists. The Internet has provided terrorists with a whole new virtual realm to conduct their sinister back-ally transactions. Terrorist groups are no longer confined to specific regional boundaries. Now their networks can recruit members located in any part of the globe. A person in the United States can literally take a terrorist training course within the privacy of their own bedroom.


Jihadi Training and Technology

Jihadi Develops Idea for Anti-MRAP Weapon

As quickly as Western corporations and militaries attempt to develop new technologies for deployment in combat zones, jihadists just as fervently research these technologies and strive to discover means to defeat them. One such technology is Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, which are capable of withstanding blasts from buried explosive devices, preserving the lives of soldiers. Insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan have demonstrated through their communications and videos that improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are a primary means of attack against enemy forces traveling on foot or in Humvees and other vehicles. In 2007, as US military officials stated their intention to increase production and deployment of MRAPs, jihadists devised ideas for insurgents to combat the vehicle using incendiary bombs, napalm, and other weapons. Between April and June 2009, a jihadist on the al-Fallujah jihadist forum developed an idea for a new anti-MRAP weapon, which he named the “Zarqawi bomber,” after the slain leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

The user on the al-Fallujah forum, calling himself, “Hujoum al-Irhabi” (“Terrorist Attack”), directed his suggestion to fighters in the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), al-Qaeda’s front group in Iraq. His initial design for the “Zarqawi bomber,” as outlined in his post on April 15, combined the idea of a rifle grenade with a RKG-3 anti-tank grenade, and outlined specifications for the gun and warhead. The gun, Hujoum al-Irhabi said, should have a 41mm caliber muzzleloader, combat range of 10-20m, and have a medium-degree of recoil. It employs a mechanism that increases the velocity of the warhead relative to a conventional gun. He commented:

“This weapon is convenient for the current situation on the Iraqi front. It is more suitable for it and its ground requirements in the current circumstances, especially with the introduction of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected [MRAP] vehicles. It is more efficient than those that came before it in resisting the kinetic energy projectiles and the sparks of explosive devices. But it is weak to chemical energy bombs of the hollow charge kind, which was demonstrated when those vehicles were attacked by thermal bombs.”

In addition to his design to strike MRAPs, Hujoum al-Irhabi suggested military tactics that ISI fighters may employ using the “Zarqawi bomber.” His idea entails a group of three men to fire upon a targeted convoy of armored vehicles using the bomber, an RPG-7, and a Kalashnikov rifle, and for a support group of four fighters to fire mortar shells and rockets from a distance. He advised:

“Americans follow the principle of =0. This means that they are trying to fight battles with the least possible losses or without any losses at all. Therefore, the principle of the surviving mujahideen must be =0. The targeted vehicles have a high chance of survival and the soldiers wear Kevlar vests and helmets even when they are inside their vehicles. It must then be hit to a degree that ensures death and not merely damaging the vehicle or wounding its elements.”

The jihadist posted an update to his design on June 15, suggesting a booster to increase the velocity of the warhead and implementing a system that doesn’t allow flames to exit from the rear of the weapon. On the latter point, he said: “Among the attributes of this weapon is the absence of flames in its back, which makes it a good weapon to be launched from inside buildings when performing ambushes or in guerrilla warfare, or to clean rooms and buildings before raiding them from a distance.” The booster uses the propellant inside a Pika gun and an electric fuse. Hujoum al-Irhabi provided a detailed explanation of the new design, including several detailed diagrams that illustrate his idea. His post also included ideas for insurgents to use against cage armor, which protects vehicles against anti-tank RPGs.

The proposed weapon and the positive and constructive responses generated by the other forum members in response demonstrate the enthusiasm exhibited by jihadists towards assisting insurgents, particularly those affiliated with al-Qaeda, against Western militaries. Such work by these forum members is perceived to be a form of jihad, which is encouraged by jihadist ideologues and al-Qaeda leaders. Hujoum al-Irhabi prayed that his design would benefit the ISI, and through its fighters, enable him to kill US soldiers vicariously. He said: “I hope that this idea will benefit the mujahideen no matter if with a mere one-millionth [fraction], and I pray unto Allah to accept it from me and put it in the scale of my rewards and benefit me with it on the day where nothing counts but rewards.”

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1 SITE Intelligence Group, “Jihadist Suggests Anti-MRAP Device,” 16 April 2009.

Iraq

5/2 - The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), through its media arm, al-Furqan, issued a video of its fighters throwing incendiary devices at a “Crusader” Humvee in Fallujah, Anbar province in Iraq. The attack is undated. Footage shows a nighttime scene in which two men throw incendiary devices at the vehicle, causing two blasts.

5/4 - The leader of the Islamic Army in Iraq (IAI) addressed an open letter to US President Barack Obama. Obama is presented what the leader calls a “golden opportunity to accomplish the mission [in Iraq],” and to fulfill his campaign promise of change as it relates to US foreign policy. In particular, he focused on Obama’s proposed withdrawal from Iraq and says that effective dealing with Iraq entails a change in US policy towards Iraq, not mere “patchwork and short term solutions.” Withdrawal must be total, without exception, and apologies must be given to the Iraqi people. He also suggested that the US and international community deal with the resistance as a “liberation force” and representative of the people as a means to build a fair political system.

5/8 - The ISI issued a video of detonating an improvised explosive device (IED) on what they say is an Iraqi troop carrier in Diwala province. The attack is undated. Footage shows an IED detonating beneath a vehicle as it approaches a bridge.

5/11 - Ansar al-Islam issued a video showing a bombing that targeted what it says is a US Humvee in Balad, Salah al-Din province in Iraq. The attack is undated. Footage shows an improvised explosive device (IED) blowing up as a vehicle approaches. Ansar al-Islam said that the Humvee was damaged in the blast.

5/11 - Abu Abdul Halim Ismael al-Baghdadi, described as the leader of the Arrows of Righteousness Brigades, criticized the Mujahideen Army in a 48-page document entitled, “The Mujahideen Army on the Scales of the Shariah of the Lord of the Worlds, Part 1.” Abu Abdul Halim’s criticisms are motivated by a text released by the Mujahideen Army in July 2008 entitled: “Worshippers of Allah… Stand Out.” That text outlined the Mujahideen Army’s reasons for leaving the Political Council for the Iraqi Resistance (PCIR), an alliance of nationalist insurgent factions. As the Mujahideen Army was any ally to groups that adopted the Awakening project, Abu Abdul Halim argues that it should therefore assume the “Shariah consequence” of all the actions of its allies.

5/18 - The “Science and Technology Body” of the Shariah Committee of Ansar al-Sunnah issued documentation with a video providing details about its new missile, the “Ansar Arrow.” Both the documentation and video show and describe the various components of the missile, including the warhead, motors, fins, and chambers. The missile is described as a medium-range, surface-to-surface missile, with a design similar to the Russian-made missile, FROG-7B (LUNA-M), and electric system similar to 8K14-E missiles and long-range Scud missiles. The warhead, the “Science and Technology Body” explains, may be filled with explosive, chemical, or nuclear material, or anti-armor or anti-personnel mines.
Footage shows an improvised explosive device (IED) blowing up beneath the vehicle. Ansar al-Islam said that the Humvee was damaged in the blast.

5/27- The Mujahideen Army claimed the killing of three Americans at a base east of Fallujah, in Anbar province in Iraq, in a communiqué issued on jihadist forums on May 27, 2009. The claimed attack occurred on May 25, when insurgents from the group planted a “sophisticated” improvised explosive device (IED) inside a base and detonated it when a convoy returned to the base. Three Americans, including a senior official named Terrence Barnich, a Defense Department employee, and a soldier were killed in the blast. The Mujahideen Army referenced a statement from US Ambassador to Iraq Christopher Hill that identified one of the slain as Barnich, the Deputy Director of the Iraq Transition Assistance Office.

5/18: Ansar al-Islam bombs Humvee in Mosul

5/6- The Taliban reported that 150 Afghan civilians were killed and wounded in US air raids in Farah province in Afghanistan. The US aerial offensive in Farah, which the Taliban said is a retaliatory action for recent military activity by Taliban fighters, is alleged by the Taliban to have killed only civilians. According to media reports, Afghan officials in Farah province report that 30 civilians were killed.

5/6- At least 36 American soldiers and 28 Afghan policemen and soldiers were reported killed by Taliban fighters in attacks between May 6 and May 8, 2009. In Saydabad district in Wardak on May 8, the Taliban claimed killing 30 American soldiers as a result of an armed attack on an infantry patrol. Six American soldiers and 17 Afghan policemen were reportedly killed in a Taliban raid on a police academy in Gardez district in Paktia on May 6, and an unspecified number of American soldiers were reportedly killed in an ambush on an American convoy in Paktia on May 8. In Musa Qala district in Helmand province on May 8, the Taliban claimed killing 20 Afghan and foreign soldiers in an ambush.

5/12- The Taliban claimed killing 50 Afghan and foreign soldiers in a large-scale offensive in Khost, eastern Afghanistan, and provides details in two communiqués. The first message claimed that 33 Taliban fighters equipped with three bomb-laden cars and light and heavy weapons stormed the provincial governor’s office, security command, and municipal building. A second message from the group said that 30 “trained martyrdom-seekers” simultaneously attacked these targets, starting with a suicide car bombing in front of the governor’s office. Seven other “martyrdom-seekers” carried out suicide bombings inside the buildings, killing 50 enemy soldiers total and destroying 20 military vehicles. The 22 remaining Taliban fighters returned to their centers.

5/22- The Taliban claimed downing a NATO helicopter in Tirin Kot district in Uruzgan province, Afghanistan. They said that Taliban fighters struck the helicopter in the morning, causing it to catch fire and fall to the ground and killing eight soldiers and an interpreter. A NATO statement said that a helicopter belonging to its International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) made an emergency landing in Tirin Kot on May 22, due to mechanical problems.

5/28- The Taliban claimed a suicide bombing in Ghazni province in Afghanistan striking Polish forces. The group reported that on May 27, in Gelan district, a suicide bomber driving a bomb-laden vehicle struck a military convoy of Polish forces, killing 10 soldiers. According to media reports, the Ghazni provincial police chief, Khyal Baz Shizai, said two civilians were killed and two soldiers wounded as a result of the suicide bombing.

Afghanistan

5/4- The head of the Political Committee of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Mullah Abdul Latif Mansour, criticized the upcoming Afghan presidential election. Incumbent president, Hamid Karzai, registered on May 4 as a candidate for Afghanistan’s August presidential election. Mullah Mansour argued that it is not Afghans who elect their president, but the president is appointed by US. He therefore urged Afghans to boycott the elections, saying that voting is a “mere waste of time” and the election is a “conspiracy” by “occupation” forces.

5/15- Al-Ansar Media Center, on behalf of Neda al-Jihad Foundation, released a video featuring attacks in Kunar province in Afghanistan. The video is titled, “Rain of Bombs,” and includes clips that were previously released on a Turkish jihadist website. These clips show a clash with Afghan soldiers, striking a helicopter sitting on the ground, and an elderly fighter holding an RPG launcher. Other footage includes a speech by the Taliban military commander in Kunar, Mawlawi Abdul Raheem, and attacks carried out with light and heavy weapons, rockets, and mortar shells.

5/28: Ansar al-Islam bombs Humvee in Mosul

5/15: Neda al-Jihad, “Rain of Bombs”
Iran

5/29- Jundallah, the “Iranian People’s Resistance Movement,” claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing in Zahedan, southeastern Iran. Jundallah is a Sunni insurgent group based in Baluchistan. The suicide bombing was carried out near a mosque in Zahedan on May 28, and according to media reports, 19 individuals were killed and 125 were injured. Jundallah said that this attack is revenge for Baluch people who were executed by Iran, and was carried out as Iranian militia elements were insulting Sunnis during a celebration.

Algeria

5/11- An ambush targeting Algerian municipal guard in Theniat al-Had, Tissemsilt province in Algeria, is featured in a video issued by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). AQIM claimed this attack, which occurred on September 30, 2008, in a communiqué issued on jihadist forums on January 1. Footage shows AQIM fighters opening fire on the truck carrying the municipal guards, then pulling the dead bodies from the truck and removing their clothing. Several guns, a large quantity of ammunition, mobile phones, clothing, and ID cards of the dead are displayed. A child, indicated by AQIM to be the son of a slain fighter, and who was born and raised in the mountains, is shown reading passages from the Qur’an which encourage strength in faith.

5/17- Abu Muhammad Salah, the Media Official of AQIM, responded to what he said are lies propagated by the media to deceive Algerian Muslims. The lies to which he responded with denial include: that Abu Muhammad Salah is prepared to surrender; that jihadist ideologue Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi distanced himself from AQIM; and that Abu Muhammad al-Fatih and fighters from Skikda Brigade are ready to conclude a ceasefire with Algerian authorities. He also said that the media does not report some AQIM operations and downplays their activity, while exaggerating losses inflicted upon AQIM.

5/20- AQIM announced an extension of 15 days for Britain to heed its demands for the release of its national, Edwen Dyer. On April 26, AQIM gave Britain a period of 20 days to release Abu Qatada al-Filistini (the Palestinian) and threatened to execute the captive Briton if that demand is not met. They said that this extension is “one last chance” given by AQIM to exhaust Britain’s delays and so that the British people know AQIM is serious in their demands. AQIM added: “It is one precious and last opportunity for them and their government before the threat is executed. He is forgiven who has warned.”

Somalia

5/7- The Shabaab al-Mujahideen Movement (“Shabaab”) reported that one of its field commanders in Mogadishu avoided an assassination attempt by a Somali militia. According to the message, a militia under the command of the Somali Interior Minister attempted to kill the unnamed field commander in his car, but failed. A clash erupted afterwards between the militia elements and Shabaab fighters.

5/10- The Shabaab declared victory after four days of heavy fighting with enemy forces in Mogadishu. Nine pictures were attached to their message that show the aftermath of combat, including a slain “apostate” and the banner taken by the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) as its logo raised in Mogadishu Stadium. The stadium is noted by the Shabaab to be the largest base for the enemy. After seizing the stadium, the Shabaab said that their fighters went to three other important bases, where the enemies fled in fear.

Uzbekistan

5/27- The Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) claimed two attacks in Andijan, Uzbekistan, striking Uzbek forces. They said that a division from the group, the “Ma Wara’un-Nahr division,” referring to the region of southwest Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, in Khanabad, attacked Uzbek security and intelligence forces in the night between May 25 and May 26. A pre-planted bomb also struck other security forces. These attacks, IJU explained, are in part retaliation for the suffering of Muslims under the regime of Uzbek President Islam Karimov. The attacks follow a threat from IJU to retaliate for the Andijan massacre that occurred in May 2005.
5/16- The Shabaab reported “fierce” clashes with enemy militias in Galgudud and Hiran provinces in Central Somalia. Clashes began when militia elements attacked Shabaab positions in these provinces to “relieve” the pressure the Shabaab exert on the Somali government and African Union forces. The Shabaab claimed killing six militia elements in one battle within these clashes. They added: “It must be mentioned that the Crusader governments that support the apostate government in Somalia strive to form tribal militias loyal to them like the Awakenings in Iraq, but the mujahideen are waiting for them everywhere and watching their movements very closely.”

5/18- The Shabaab announced that it took control of Jowhar, the regional capital of Middle Shabelle, Somalia, and ousted from it militia elements in a communiqué issued on jihadist forums. Jowhar is described by the Shabaab as a strategic city. They said that on May 17, Shabaab fighters launched an offensive against militias centered in Jowhar, forcing them to flee. Afterwards, Shabaab preachers moved into the area and spoke to the people, telling them that the situation is well. The Shabaab reported that one of its fighters died in the offensive.

5/21- Sheikh Ali Mahmoud Raghi AKA Ali Tairi was announced by the Shabaab as its new spokesman, replacing Sheikh Mukhtar Robo Ali Abu Mansour. Raghi is the former governor of the “Islamic Emirate” in the central provinces of Somalia. No reason is provided for the change. The Shabaab said: “Sheikh Abu Mansour, may Allah protect him, held the position for two years and did a good job. He enjoys the respect and the love of Muslims from around the globe.”

5/22- A suicide bombing at a military base in Mogadishu was claimed by the Shabaab. On May 24, the Shabaab said that one of its Somali fighters, Abdul Qadr Hassan Muhammad, carried out a suicide bombing at a military base in Mogadishu and killed 22 “apostates.” Media reports indicated that six guards and at least one civilian at the base were killed.

5/26- The Shabaab al-Mujahideen claimed three attacks killing 25 Somali soldiers and militia elements in Mogadishu and Middle Shabelle between May 26 and May 27 in three communiqués. In Mogadishu, on May 27, the Shabaab reported that a surprise attack launched by its fighters against Somali soldiers killed three; and on May 26, an attack with mortar shells killed a total of 17 soldiers – 10 inside the target, Villa Somalia, and 7 at a hospital who died from injuries sustained in the attack. In Middle Shabelle, on May 26, the Shabaab reported killing five militia elements in the region’s forests.

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