



COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER AT WEST POINT

# CTC SENTINEL

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## About the CTC Sentinel

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

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

## General (R) John P. Abizaid Joins Editorial Board



THE COMBATING Terrorism Center is pleased to announce that General (R) John P. Abizaid has joined the *CTC Sentinel's* Editorial Board. Abizaid, who recently became the Distinguished Chair

of the Combating

Terrorism Center, retired from the United States Army in May 2007 after 34 years of active service.

After graduating from the United States Military Academy at West Point, Abizaid rose from infantry platoon leader to become, at that time, the youngest four-star general in the Army. At the time of his retirement he was the longest-serving commander of United States Central Command. As commander of Central Command, Abizaid oversaw 250,000 U.S. troops in a 27-country region.

During his distinguished career, he commanded units at every level, serving in the combat zones of Grenada, Lebanon, Kurdistan, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. Units under his command have included the 1st Infantry Division, a brigade in the 82nd Airborne Division, and two Ranger companies. Abizaid worked on the Joint Staff three times, the last as director. From 1997-1999, Abizaid served as the 66th commandant of cadets at West Point.

Abizaid is highly decorated and has been awarded the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Army Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star. He also holds military honors from countries such as Germany, Poland, France, Romania, Bulgaria, Afghanistan, Australia and Egypt.

Abizaid studied at the University of Jordan in Amman on an Olmsted scholarship, a military award offered to only a handful of young Army officers each year. Additionally, he holds a master's degree in Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard University. Abizaid is widely considered to be an expert in the field of Middle Eastern affairs.

His experience and knowledge of the region makes him a valuable addition to the *CTC Sentinel's* Editorial Board.

Erich Marquardt  
Editor-in-Chief, *CTC Sentinel*

### REPORTS

#### Al-Qa`ida in Yemen's 2008 Campaign

By Gregory D. Johnsen

FOLLOWING THE DRAMATIC escape of 23 al-Qa`ida suspects from a Political Security prison in Sana`a in early February 2006, there has been a fear that Yemen could once again become an active theater of operations for Islamic militants. That fear has now been realized. During the past few months, al-Qa`ida in Yemen has embarked on an aggressive propaganda campaign that has been accompanied by a series of equally aggressive attacks. Tourist convoys, army checkpoints, oil fields, the U.S. Embassy and most recently a housing compound for foreigners have all been targeted as part of the group's stated goal to "expel the unbelievers from the Arabian Peninsula."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This phrase has appeared at the top of all four statements released by The Soldier's Brigade of Yemen on February 24, 2008, March 21, 2008, March 30, 2008 and April 7, 2008. All statements were accessed via the al-Ikhlās website.

Given Yemen's reputation for violence and the journalistic clichés that accompany nearly every English report of a country teeming with guns and its importance as Usama bin Ladin's "ancestral homeland," it may seem that this latest series of attacks is merely a continuation of the past. This, however, is not the case. Al-Qa`ida in Yemen took a major step forward in January 2008 with the publication of the first issue of its online journal *Sada al-Malabim* (The Echo of Battles), which articulated in bold, broad strokes the group's new strategy. Instead of the large, one-time attacks favored by the previous generation, this group under the leadership of Nasir al-Wahayshi has initiated a policy of constant offense consisting of small, continual attacks. Al-Qa`ida in Yemen seems to understand that there is no one knockout blow that will force Westerners out of Yemen and bring the government to its knees, but rather that it must maintain a constant barrage of activity.

### The Mistakes

The past four months should not have come as a surprise to close observers of the situation in Yemen, as the group has grown increasingly bolder and more active since it was reorganized by al-Wahayshi. The latest attacks illustrate the dangers of lapsed vigilance of which both the U.S. and Yemeni governments are guilty. It also demonstrates the fallacy of attempting to isolate counter-terrorism from other U.S. policy objectives; this can be done on a spreadsheet, but not always in the minds of foreign counterparts.

There is also a lesson on the dangers of negligence. Yemen is quickly becoming a failed state. It is running out of oil and recently it has increased production in an attempt to ease budget shortfalls. Yet, it is only borrowing against its future, and even this is not sufficient. Disaffected youth in the south have taken to the streets to protest the lack of jobs and rising prices. Not surprisingly, these protests have turned violent and further exacerbated longstanding tensions between the north and the south. The nearly four-year-old al-Houthi revolt continues to sporadically flare-up despite the numerous cease-fires and half-hearted peace negotiations. As a result, the Yemeni government may now be too concerned with its own survival to give the al-Qa`ida issue the attention it deserves.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For example, in early April when much of the Eng-

The United States has failed to understand the situation in which President `Ali `Abdullah Salih's regime sees itself, and instead of helping to ensure regime stability it has seemed more eager to threaten the country for perceived betrayals such as the Jamal al-Badawi case.<sup>3</sup> Both countries have also failed to understand that Yemen is witnessing

## **"In retrospect, however, al-Ahdal's capture marked the end of the first phase of the war against al-Qa`ida in Yemen."**

something both new and dangerous. Al-Qa`ida in Yemen was defeated by the close cooperation of the United States and Yemen during the first phase of the war (2000-2003), but it learned from the loss. Now, while al-Qa`ida in Yemen has adapted to the changing environment, both the United States and Yemen appear ready to fight what it was instead of what it has become.

### The First and Second Phases

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, Yemen, like many countries, was eager to appease the United States. It had unpleasant memories of the last time it thwarted U.S. policy and was eager to avoid repeating the same mistakes.<sup>4</sup> During a November 2001 visit

lish language reporting on the country was focused on al-Qa`ida attacks against foreigners, the majority of the Arabic reporting on Yemen focused on protests in the south.

<sup>3</sup> The United States withheld aid to Yemen once it became public knowledge that Jamal al-Badawi was free. It is likely that the public nature of U.S. disapproval was a contributing factor to Jabir al-Banna's surprise appearance in court in February 2008. Yemen security reportedly reacted to the public snub by the United States by encouraging al-Banna to appear in public. Despite their past crimes and continued support, neither al-Banna nor al-Badawi are part of the current al-Qa`ida campaign in Yemen.

<sup>4</sup> Yemen served on the UN Security Council during the 1990-91 Gulf War, and its continued abstentions on security resolutions threatening Iraq won it the displeasure of the United States, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. All three cut off aid to Yemen, while the latter took the even more damaging step of expelling roughly 750,000 guest workers, which cut off worker remittances and helped destabilize the Yemeni economy.

to Washington, President Salih made sure the United States knew what side his country was on. Yemen followed Salih's words with actions, arresting anyone it suspected of harboring sympathy for al-Qa`ida. It also worked hand-in-hand with U.S. intelligence services, coordinating the November 2002 strike on al-Qa`ida's head in Yemen, `Ali Qa`id al-Harithi, which was conducted by an unmanned CIA drone. Yet this represented the zenith of U.S.-Yemeni cooperation, as a Pentagon leak, intended for domestic political consumption, destroyed the cover story on which both countries had agreed. Salih paid a high price domestically for allowing the United States to carry out an attack in Yemen, and it took more than a year for the government to publicly admit that it had authorized Washington to act. The United States was still paying the price for hubris a year later in November 2003, when Yemen captured Muhammad Hamdi al-Ahdal, al-Harithi's replacement, at a wedding in Sana`a. Instead of being granted direct access to the prisoner, U.S. officials were forced to work through intermediaries.

In retrospect, however, al-Ahdal's capture marked the end of the first phase of the war against al-Qa`ida in Yemen. With most of the suspected militants either in jail or drawn to the fighting in Iraq, al-Qa`ida faded into the background alongside a host of other more pressing concerns faced by Yemen. For Yemen, al-Qa`ida and Islamic militancy has always been largely a Western problem that affects the country indirectly, but is nowhere near as pressing as a religious uprising among Zaydis in the north or economic woes that exacerbate tensions between the north and the south. These latter two issues are security challenges that directly threaten the survival of the regime, while al-Qa`ida, at least in Yemen's calculus, does not.

Both Yemen and the United States slowly began to act as if the threat from al-Qa`ida had been neutralized. Yemen became increasingly more occupied with putting down the al-Houthi uprising in the Sa`da governorate and with implementing bitter economic reforms that led to riots and widespread dissatisfaction.<sup>5</sup> On the U.S. side, there were a lack of clear policy goals. During a November 2005 trip to the United

<sup>5</sup> Gregory D. Johnsen, "Salih's Road to Relection," *Middle East Report Online*, January 13, 2006.

States, Salih was told that Yemen was being suspended from a U.S. government program, the Millennium Challenge Account. The suspension shocked Salih, who was under the impression that he was going to be rewarded for Yemen's help in the war against al-Qa`ida. Instead, he was hurt by the loss of \$20 million in aid. The following day, his anger was compounded when the World Bank told him that it was cutting its aid from \$420 million to \$280 million. Both of the cuts were attributed to rampant corruption within the Yemeni government.

American claims of corruption were on the mark. Yemen is plagued by "double-dippers," employees who draw two or more government salaries, as well as by "shadow employees," workers who exist only on paper but still receive paychecks. Nevertheless, it is important for U.S. policymakers to understand that Washington cannot have everything it wants in Yemen. The United States must decide whether it wants a partner in the war against al-Qa`ida, or whether it wants a country that is attempting to meet democratic benchmarks. No matter the goal, the starting point has to be a stable Yemen. Withdrawing aid from Yemen, whatever the reason, only makes stabilizing the country that much more difficult. Already the government does not have firm control over the hinterlands, which is why the recent attacks in Mar'ib and Hadramawt are not that surprising. The more worrying trend is the two attacks on the U.S. Embassy and the Haddah housing complex in Sana`a. Al-Qa`ida in Yemen has learned from watching the fighting in Iraq that it can thrive in an unstable and chaotic environment. Yemen's ever increasing slide toward instability only provides al-Qa`ida with more operative freedom.

Mistakes of policy and vigilance could be concealed when al-Qa`ida was largely dormant in the country. That dynamic changed, however, with the February 2006 prison break. Within months, al-Qa`ida was once again a security threat in the country, attempting what would ultimately be failed suicide attacks on oil and gas facilities in Mar'ib and Hadramawt.<sup>6</sup> This early and haphazard

6 For more on the aftermath of this attack, the trial of which is still ongoing, see Robert F. Worth, "Wanted by the F.B.I., but Walking out of a Yemeni Hearing," *New York Times*, March 1, 2008. For more background on the

attempt was soon eclipsed by a more professional attack in July 2007 when a suicide bomber struck a convoy of Spanish tourists in Mar'ib. This attack followed on the heels of two al-Qa`ida statements, both of which were essentially a call to arms by al-Qa`ida in Yemen's new commander, Nasir al-Wahayshi.<sup>7</sup> He has worked hard to rebuild and reorganize al-Qa`ida in Yemen and has been careful to apply the lessons he learned from the organization's early failures to his current task.

#### The 2008 Campaign

One of al-Wahayshi's major accomplishments was the publication of the online journal *Sada al-Malahim* in January 2008. The first issue features an interview with a Saudi fighter, Abu Hammam al-Qahtani, who explains his rationale for remaining in Arabia instead of traveling to Iraq. "This choice was made for two reasons," he said in the interview. "The first is a legal reason." He then proceeded to quote a Qur'anic verse and a hadith that command Muslims to "expel the unbelievers from the Arabian Peninsula." His second reason is a military one. Remaining in Yemen, he explained, will allow him to strike at oil supplies in Arabia that aid the West in its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>8</sup> The journal was quite clearly an opening salvo in a propaganda war. It was aimed at a broad audience, with small features on some of the classical figures of the jihadist world including Sayyid Qutb, `Umar `Abd al-Rahman, and the Saudi fighter known as Khattab.<sup>9</sup>

February 2006 escape, see Gregory D. Johnsen, "Tracking Yemen's 23 Escaped Jihadis - Part 1," *Terrorism Monitor* 5:18 (2007) and Gregory D. Johnsen, "Tracking Yemen's 23 Escaped Jihadis - Part 2," *Terrorism Monitor* 5:19 (2007). Also see "Al-Ghad Publishes the Names and Information about the Escapees" (Arabic), *al-Ghad*, June 25, 2007.

7 Al-Wahayshi was introduced as the new head of al-Qa`ida in Yemen by Abu Hurayra al-Sana`ani, the *kunya* of Qasim al-Raymi. Both men were among the 23 escapees. For more on the events of July 2007 and al-Wahayshi's background, see "Al-Wahayshi the Leader of al-Qa`ida in Yemen" (Arabic), *al-Wasat*, June 27, 2007; Gregory D. Johnsen and Brian O'Neill, "Yemen Attack Reveals Struggles Among al-Qaeda's Ranks," *Terrorism Focus* 4:22 (2007); Gregory D. Johnsen, "Al-Qaeda in Yemen Reorganizes under Nasir al-Wahayshi," *Terrorism Focus* 5:11 (2008).

8 "An Interview with One of the Wanted Men - Part 1" (Arabic), *Sada al-Malahim* #1, January 2008, p. 8.

9 Khattab was poisoned by Russian forces in Chechnya in 2002. His real name was Samir Salih Abdullah al-

Within days of releasing the first issue of *Sada al-Malahim* in January 2008, al-Qa`ida in Yemen attacked a convoy of tourists in Hadramawt on January 18, killing two Belgians and two Yemeni drivers. The attack seemed to fit a pattern that al-Qa`ida had developed in June and July

### **"Al-Qa`ida in Yemen has learned from watching the fighting in Iraq that it can thrive in an unstable and chaotic environment."**

2007 of conducting an attack on the heels of a public statement.<sup>10</sup> Little more than a month later, on February 24, a previously unknown group calling itself The Soldier's Brigade of Yemen released a one-page statement on al-Ikhlās claiming credit for the attack on the Belgian convoy, as well as the March 2007 assassination of Ali Mahmud al-Qasaylah, the July 2007 attack on Spanish tourists in Mar'ib and two attacks on military checkpoints in Hadramawt in November 2007.<sup>11</sup> Initially, there were thoughts among intelligence officers in Yemen that this group was a fiction that existed only on the internet and was trying to steal credit from al-Wahayshi's group. More recent evidence, however, indicates that this is not the case.

On March 29, for example, the same user, Jund al-Iman, posted a 13-minute video on al-Ikhlās that included the last will and testament of a suicide bomber who identified himself as Abu al-Miqdad al-Sana`ani. The footage on the video

Suwaylim.

10 For more, see Gregory D. Johnsen, "Attacks on Oil are a First Priority for al-Qaeda in Yemen," *Terrorism Focus* 5:5 (2008).

11 "Statement 1," The Soldier's Brigade of Yemen, February 24, 2008. The full name of the group is: The al-Qa`ida Organization of Jihad in the Arabian Peninsula: The Soldier's Brigade of Yemen. There are a handful of mistakes and typos throughout the four statements that this group has released, all of which have posted on al-Ikhlās by a user identified as Jund al-Iman (Soldier of Faith). For example, in the first statement the group said that al-Qasaylah was assassinated in April 2007, but he was actually killed in March 2007. Other mistakes are mainly limited to typos and misspellings in Arabic. For more on al-Qasaylah, see Gregory D. Johnsen, "Is al-Qaeda in Yemen Regrouping?" *Terrorism Focus* 4:15 (2007).

indicated that al-Sana`ani was the bomber who carried out the July 2007 attack on the Spanish tourists in Mar`ib. Al-Sana`ani, whose real name was Abdu Muhammad Said al-Ruhayqah, clearly states on the video that he is carrying out the attack for The Soldier's Brigade of Yemen.<sup>12</sup> There is also the fact that *Sada al-Malahim*, which is being directed by al-Wahayshi, neglected to deny that The Soldier's Brigade of Yemen was speaking for it in its second issue, which was released on March 13. Al-Qa`ida in Yemen's information officer, Sayf Muhammad, did put out a statement denying that a January interview between the local Yemeni paper *al-Wasat* and an individual claiming to be al-Qa`ida in Yemen's information officer was legitimate.<sup>13</sup> "We say that we are the al-Qa`ida organization of jihad in the South of the Arabian Peninsula and that the callers are ignorant of the situation and have no relationship with the group."<sup>14</sup> While it is far from clear whether the same people are putting out both *Sada al-Malahim* and the statements of The Soldier's Brigade of Yemen, it appears that they are either united under al-Wahayshi's leadership or at least working in concert.

The second issue of *Sada al-Malahim* is both smoother and more authoritative of tone than its earlier version. Just like the first issue of the journal, the second was followed almost immediately by an attention-grabbing attack. On March 18, the U.S. Embassy in Sana`a was the target of three mortars that fell short of the embassy, killing one guard and injuring a number of girls at a neighboring school.<sup>15</sup> Almost immediately, The Soldier's Brigade of Yemen released a statement claiming credit for a March 1 clash with government

soldiers in Mukalla and the attack on the U.S. Embassy. The statement expressed regret at the injuries to the schoolgirls and asked God for their quick recovery. It went on to say, however, that "previously we have warned Muslims about not getting too close to government and foreign offices."<sup>16</sup> A little more than a week later, The Soldier's Brigade of Yemen put out

**"The more successful and vocal the group is, the more recruits who want to join."**

its third statement claiming that it had attacked a French oil pipeline on March 27 and a Chinese oil field on March 29.<sup>17</sup> The Yemeni government acknowledged that there had been a pipeline explosion, but denied that it was a terrorist attack.<sup>18</sup> Al-Qa`ida in Yemen followed these attacks up with its most recent strikes on two military checkpoints in Hadramawt and a mortar attack on a housing compound for foreigners in the Haddah district of Sana`a. In the statement, the group reiterated its claim that it would not rest until the last unbeliever had been driven from the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>19</sup>

**Securing the Future**

This campaign is likely to get stronger before it gets weaker for two reasons. First, al-Qa`ida in Yemen has effectively exploited U.S. and Yemeni negligence to carefully lay the groundwork for a successful campaign by linking its rhetoric to action. Tied to this is the fact that it has slowly increased the number and focus of its attacks, which appears to have increased recruiting. The more successful and vocal the group is, the more recruits who want to join. Second, al-Qa`ida in Yemen will continue to benefit from the lack of stability in Yemen. Not only is government attention directed elsewhere, but so is the attention of the population at large. This means that while the government is unable to devote its finite resources toward combating al-

Qa`ida, there has also not been a visceral public backlash to the deaths of Yemenis during this campaign such as what has helped to derail other campaigns like the one in Saudi Arabia in 2003.

For the United States, the stability of Yemen is the first and most important step in winning the second phase of the war against al-Qa`ida in Yemen. Unfortunately, this will not be easy to secure. Washington must be realistic about what is and is not possible in Yemen. It must decide on clear, realistic policy goals and accurately articulate these to the Yemeni government. The previous carrot-and-stick approach is not a sustainable policy. Washington will have to put more money, not less, into the country if it wants to prevent full collapse. Simply throwing money at the problem and clearly articulating policy goals, however, will not be enough to stabilize Yemen. Washington will also have to work in concert with its allies, particularly Saudi Arabia, which has much more influence in Yemen than does the United States. None of these steps will be easy, but failure to carry out any of them will almost certainly result in the continued instability of the country, which will in turn allow al-Qa`ida in Yemen more strategic freedom.

Al-Qa`ida in Yemen has already shown that it can rise from the ashes of defeat stronger and better organized than it ever was originally. The United States and Yemen have yet to prove that they can adapt as quickly and as ably as al-Qa`ida has done, but both must be flexible if they hope to win the second phase of the war against al-Qa`ida in Yemen and prevent future incarnations.

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<sup>12</sup> Al-Ruhayqah was from the Musayk neighborhood of Sana`a, which would fit with his *kunya* of Abu al-Miqdad al-Sana`ani. Furthermore, the age of the man on the video seems to match with al-Ruhayqah, who was 21-years-old.

<sup>13</sup> *Al-Wasat* has since lost its license for domestic political reasons that have nothing to do with al-Qa`ida, in another mistaken move by the Yemeni government as it feels threatened.

<sup>14</sup> "Statement of Denial" (Arabic), *Sada al-Malahim* #2, March 2008, p. 8. It should also be noted that in the second issue of *Sada al-Malahim*, al-Qa`ida in Yemen changed its name to: "Al-Qa`ida Organization of Jihad in the South of the Arabian Peninsula." The group is referred to as al-Qa`ida in Yemen throughout this article for the sake of continuity and brevity.

<sup>15</sup> "Families and Teachers Concerned Post Attack," *Yemen Times*, March 19, 2008.

<sup>16</sup> "Statement 2," The Soldier's Brigade of Yemen, March 21, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> "Statement 3," The Soldier's Brigade of Yemen, March 30, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> "Yemen Says Pipeline Explosion not Terror," UPI, April 1, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> "Statement 4," The Soldier's Brigade of Yemen, April 7, 2008.

## The LIFG's Current Role in the Global Jihad

By Alison Pargeter

WITH INCREASING NUMBERS of suicide attacks in Algeria, the uncovering of militant cells in Morocco and the recent kidnappings of two Austrian tourists in Tunisia, North Africa appears to be once again becoming a hotspot of Islamist militancy. Although the Islamist movement in Libya was deemed to have been all but eliminated by the Mu`ammar Qadhafi regime at the end of the 1990s, concerns are now mounting that this North African state will not be able to escape the new wave of violence and militancy that is blighting the region. These fears were further compounded in November 2007 when al-Qa`ida ideologue Ayman al-Zawahiri and Libyan militant Abu Laith al-Libi announced that the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) was joining al-Qa`ida. It appeared that this movement, known for its nationalism and its fierce independence, as well as its rejection of Usama bin Ladin, had at last joined the al-Qa`ida network, linking Libya into what many observers have described as al-Qa`ida's North African front.

### Examining the al-Qa`ida-LIFG Relationship

As with most things Libyan, however, this new relationship with al-Qa`ida was not quite what it seemed. First, Abu Laith al-Libi was considered by many to have moved away from the LIFG and to have started working closely with Bin Ladin and al-Qa`ida many years ago. Second, the LIFG is a movement that was largely eliminated inside Libya at the end of the 1990s with most of its members being killed, arrested or forced to flee, and as such has existed since that time primarily as a movement in exile. Moreover, the movement has been delivered further blows in recent years as prominent LIFG members have been arrested abroad and in some cases handed back to Tripoli as part of the war on terrorism. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the leadership of the LIFG, comprising the group's amir `Abdullah Sadiq, his deputy Shaykh Abu Hazim, spiritual leader Abu al-Mundhir al-Sa`idi and two other shaykhs—Muftah al-Dawadi and `Abd al-Wahhab Qa'id, who are incarcerated in the Abu Slim prison on the outskirts of Tripoli—have been engaged in negotiations with the regime for at least the past year to try

to secure their release in return for relinquishing violence.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, Abu Laith was never considered to be part of the LIFG leadership but rather represented a remnant faction comprising a handful of Libyans who had fled Afghanistan following the U.S. attacks in November 2001 and who had scattered into Iran and the border areas with Pakistan. That is not

### **“The demise of the LIFG does not, however, mean that support for militancy inside Libya has subsided.”**

to say that this faction had been completely disregarded by the LIFG, as when the negotiations with the regime began the leadership sent an emissary to consult with those factions outside.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Libyan militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan who were still fully caught up in the world of jihad did not take kindly to the idea that their brothers were contemplating compromising with the “Pharaoh Qadhafi.” In fact, they were so outraged that in 2007 they issued a statement in the name of the LIFG condemning the Qadhafi regime and denying reports that any negotiations were taking place, a development that reportedly angered the LIFG leadership in prison who considered themselves as the only ones with the authority to speak on the group's behalf.<sup>3</sup>

Abu Laith's November 2007 announcement, therefore, appears to have been an attempt to snatch the leadership of the LIFG for himself and to try to scupper the continuation of negotiations between the true LIFG leadership and the regime. It also seems to have been a rather desperate attempt to bring back some credibility to the group and to the Libyan militant scene

more widely. Interestingly, however, Abu Laith did not announce that the LIFG was joining with al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Rather, Abu Laith made it clear that while the LIFG was ready to fight alongside his Algerian brothers, the LIFG was now part of al-Qa`ida and not AQIM. This, however, is hardly surprising given that there have long been antagonisms between Libyan and Algerian militants born out of a disastrous experience in the 1990s when members of the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) killed a number of the LIFG's best fighters after they had gone to fight in the Algerian jihad. Indeed, in spite of the shared al-Qa`ida badge, it seems that even Abu Laith was unable to transcend such nationalistic concerns.

Abu Laith's attempt to take over the LIFG and bring it under the al-Qa`ida banner was short lived. He was killed, along with the LIFG's representative in Iran, in an attack by U.S. forces in North Waziristan at the end of January 2008. His death probably marks the final nail in the coffin for this moribund organization. Indeed, it appears to have given fresh impetus to the LIFG's negotiations with the regime, as it was reported in February 2008 that in spite of some resistance from within the Libyan security services a number of LIFG prisoners were to be released, reportedly under the direct instructions of Qadhafi.<sup>4</sup> The regime is clearly supremely confident that it has finally neutralized this troublesome movement. On April 9, for example, 90 LIFG prisoners were released on the condition that they abandon political activities and strive for the building and the future of the nation.

### The Role of Libyan Jihadists

The demise of the LIFG does not, however, mean that support for militancy inside Libya has subsided. In fact, it would appear that if anything there is a renewed surge of Islamist sentiment among some of Libya's youth, particularly in the disaffected eastern regions that have long been the bastion of resistance to the regime. Much of this sentiment appears to be being channeled into support for the Iraqi jihad, with a steady stream of Libyans making their way to join the struggle there. Indeed, as the Sinjar Records show, Libyans are seemingly making up a disproportionately large

1 “The LIFG Between Fragmentation and Joining al-Qa`ida” (Arabic), [www.almoslim.net](http://www.almoslim.net), November 14, 2007.

2 Camile Tawille, “Al-Muqatila Wants its Leaders in Afghanistan and Iran...to Take Part in its Dialogue with the Libyan Security Services” (Arabic), *al-Hayat*, January 28, 2007.

3 Personal interview, former Libyan LIFG member, London, 2007.

4 “The Decision of the Releases was Issued by Qadhafi Personally” (Arabic), *Libya al-Youm*, March 4, 2008.

number of the foreign fighters who have joined the Iraqi jihad.<sup>5</sup> Although there are many different motives and reasons that might push a young man to give his life for such a cause—including Arab nationalism or sectarianism—the Islamist dimension is clearly present.

It would, however, be wrong to assume, as some commentators have done, that these recruits found their way to Iraq through LIFG or AQIM networks. Given the difficulty of any organized groups being able to operate inside Libya, as well

### **“Aside from the Libyan volunteers in Iraq, there also appears to be a growth of other militant activism in the east of the country.”**

as the weakness of these organizations, it is more likely that such volunteers went through loose networks tied into a number of preachers or mosques, particularly in the eastern cities of Derna and Benghazi.<sup>6</sup> Such flows have also been facilitated by the regime’s apparent willingness to turn a blind eye to such activism. Moreover, although not confirmed, a number of Iraqi officials have accused the Libyan regime of supporting and facilitating the Iraqi jihad, including Colonel Jubayr Rashid Naif from Anbar Province who, in January 2008, accused Qadhafi’s son, Sayf al-Islam, of supporting foreign fighters.<sup>7</sup> The regime also continues to display a somewhat ambiguous discourse on the Iraqi resistance. In February, for example, a key member of the Libyan regime, Ahmad Ibrahim, told the website IslamOnline.net that “whoever fights the occupation in Iraq are resisters” and that the willingness of the Awakening Councils to fight against al-Qa`ida was *kufir* (heretical) because “whoever co-operates with the American occupation is a *kafir* (heathen) in Islam and a *kafir* in *al-Rubab*

5 Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, *Al-Qa`ida’s Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2008).

6 As the Sinjar Records show, almost all of the Libyan volunteers came from the highly conservative eastern areas, with a particularly high concentration coming from Derna.

7 “Gaddafi Son Linked to Blasts in Iraq,” *The Australian*, January 28, 2008.

(Arabism), nationalism and humanity.”<sup>8</sup> With the regime putting out these kinds of messages, it is not surprising that young Libyans might find it acceptable to fight in Iraq.

Aside from the Libyan volunteers in Iraq, there also appears to be a growth of other militant activism in the east of the country. Although in the current climate there are many rumors coming out of Libya related to stories of weapons stashes being uncovered or cars containing explosives being found, it would seem that a number of incidents have taken place. The most notable occurred in June 2007 when three young militants blew themselves up in a house in Derna, seemingly to evade capture by the security services, something that was confirmed by Sayf al-Islam in an interview he gave with the BBC.<sup>9</sup> As in the rest of North Africa, it is clear that the underlying causes that are provoking radicalism have not disappeared.

There are many factors that would explain the perpetuation of militant ideology in Libya, particularly in the troubled east that has long been kept purposefully underdeveloped as a form of punishment for its rebellious nature, a rebellion that in fact pre-dates the Qadhafi era and is related to longstanding tribal rivalries. Indeed, although Libya is enjoying its rehabilitation in the international community and oil money is flowing back into the hands of the regime, large swathes of the population still suffer from acute socio-economic grievances including a lack of public service provision, unemployment, poor state wages and a society that operates on the basis of patronage networks and corruption. Combined with a real sense of social injustice, this, as well as the conservative nature of the east and the longstanding antagonisms that have blighted the area, has only served to fuel support for ideological alternatives to what is in fact itself a highly ideological regime.

#### **Jihadist Movement Remains Divided**

Whether these disaffected youth aspire to be part of a truly globalized Islamist movement or are even aware of al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb is another matter. The rush by commentators to assert that the LIFG had joined AQIM is to

8 Ahmad Ibrahim, “Libya Didn’t Bend Before the West but Behaved in a Clever Manner” (Arabic), IslamOnline.net, February 12, 2005.

9 See the BBC interview with Sayf al-Islam, August 2, 2007.

misunderstand the nature of the region and the huge cultural differences that exist not only between North African states but also among their Islamist movements. Although it may be true that militants from North Africa have been willing to train or work together, this does not necessarily mean that national priorities do not still override transnational ones. Indeed, in the recent Sulayman case in Tunisia, in which militants clashed with the regime in December 2007, leaving 12 dead and a further 30 arrested, the group allegedly chose to call themselves Jund Assad bin al-Furat, after the Tunisian scholar and fighter who led a Muslim army against Sicily in 827, seemingly reflecting the essentially Tunisian nature of their movement.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly in Algeria, while one faction of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) may have chosen to work under the al-Qa`ida banner, it is noticeable that other factions within the same organization have rejected such an association and are splitting away from the AQIM group. Moreover, while those militants in Morocco may well appear to be buying into the AQIM brand, there is no real evidence to suggest that there are real or extensive operational ties between these young jihadists and al-Qa`ida. That is not to say that AQIM does not exist, but rather that in the North African context the synergies should not be overplayed. Each of the militant groups or currents operating there retain their own national characteristics and although international concerns clearly cannot be ignored, these individuals are largely acting in response to specific local conditions that essentially have remained unchanged since the 1980s and 1990s and that prompted the first major wave of Islamic radicalism in the region. In this respect, Libya is no exception.

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10 Personal interviews, Tunisian lawyers defending those arrested in the Sulayman case, February 2008.

## Al-Qa`ida's Finances: Evidence of Organizational Decline?

By Matthew Levitt

SPEAKING BEFORE CONGRESS in February, Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Michael McConnell commented that during the previous 12-18 months the intelligence community noticed that "al Qaeda has had difficulty in raising funds and sustaining themselves."<sup>1</sup> In early April, Undersecretary of the Treasury Stuart Levey echoed the DNI's assessment, adding that the government's efforts to combat terrorist financing "are more integrated than ever before" and have enabled the government to disrupt or deter some sources of al-Qa`ida financing and make "significant progress mapping terrorist networks."<sup>2</sup> A Philippine military official, for example, recently disclosed that lack of funding was a major factor hindering the al-Qa`ida-linked Abu Sayyaf terrorist group from carrying out major attacks, the last of which was conducted in 2005.<sup>3</sup>

Despite being short on cash, however, al-Qa`ida and like-minded global jihadist terrorist groups still pose an acute threat. Authorities have foiled recent terrorist plots in Germany, the United Kingdom and Spain; counter-terrorism officials in France neutralized seven operational cells in the past year and officials there stress that France remains "at the top of the list" of al-Qa`ida targets;<sup>4</sup> and the director of the National Counter-Terrorism Center recently warned that "the al Qaeda threat still looms large."<sup>5</sup>

1 "Annual Worldwide Threat Assessment," Hearing of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, February 7, 2008, pp. 16-18.

2 "Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Stuart Levey Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Finance," U.S. Department of Treasury, April 1, 2008. See also Dennis M. Lormel, "Combating Terrorist Financing at the Agency and Interagency Levels," *CTC Sentinel* 1:4 (2008).

3 "Official: Leadership, Funding Problems Hamper Attacks by al-Qaida-linked Group," Associated Press, April 3, 2008.

4 Personal interview, French security and intelligence officials, March 25, 2008.

5 "Looming Challenges in the War on Terror," Remarks Presented to The Washington Institute by Michael Leiter, Acting Director, National Counter-Terrorism Center (NCTC), February 13, 2008.

The means that al-Qa`ida and affiliated groups use to raise, move and store funds present an ever moving target, as the methods of financiers and cells evolve in response to counter-measures. There are, however, some discernable trends in al-Qa`ida financing. Usama bin Ladin's personal wealth has not been a factor since the mid-1990s, and terrorists are increasingly raising funds through criminal activity and moving money via cash couriers. The abuse of charities to raise and move funds continues to be a preferred terrorist tactic, and major individual donors and organized facilitation networks remain critical sources of al-Qa`ida funds.

### The Local Jihadists

In part, the terrorist threat persists because the internet provides a cheap, fast, efficient and relatively secure means of communication, effectively creating a conveyor belt for self-radicalized foot soldiers who connect and communicate with like-minded jihadists through chat rooms and online message boards. These budding, local terrorist cells

**"Despite being short on cash, however, al-Qa`ida and like-minded global jihadist terrorist groups still pose an acute threat."**

are increasingly self-funded through the proceeds of criminal activity, use of personal funds, or government welfare benefits. Some of these cells have connections to al-Qa`ida's senior leadership but are independently and locally funded; others operate on their own in "leaderless" communities with only virtual connections to al-Qa`ida. Today, however, some plots are still funded by al-Qa`ida's leaders based along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. In some cases, terrorists are suspected of using the internet to obtain logistical and financial support for their operations.<sup>6</sup> This is part of a broader shift toward the utilization of technology in global commerce, from the

6 "Declassified Key Judgments of the National Intelligence Estimate 'Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States' Dated April 2006," Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

use of cell phones as vehicles to transfer payment, to the transfer and storage of funds via online entities such as Cash-U or E-Gold.

The case of the July 7, 2005 London subway bombers offers a perfect example of a locally-funded cell. British authorities concluded that the attacks—which were estimated to have cost less than £8,000—were self-financed. Investigators found "no evidence of external sources of income" and stressed that the group raised the necessary funds "by methods that would be very difficult to identify as related to terrorism or other serious criminality." One cell member provided the majority of the funds, defaulting on a £10,000 personal loan and overdrawing on his multiple bank accounts.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, Dhiren Barot, a terrorist operative eventually sentenced to 30 years in prison on charges of conspiracy to murder, reached out to senior al-Qa`ida leaders abroad seeking some £60,000 for a bombing plot he concocted involving limousines packed with explosives.<sup>8</sup>

There is no question, however, that terrorist cells are increasingly exposing themselves to potential law enforcement scrutiny by engaging in criminal activities to raise funds. In some cases, acts of petty crime—such as welfare fraud—raise limited amounts of money for small operations. In others, brazen crimes raise significant sums. In France, one cell netted about €1 million when a cell member whose job was to restock ATMs simulated robberies on several machines. In another case in France, a cell blew a hole in the wall of a cash distribution center and would have walked away with €4 million had the hole not been too small for them to enter.<sup>9</sup>

### Tried and True Finance Methods

Even with the proliferation of local and self-led terrorist cells, traditional methods of terrorist financing—such as the abuse of charities, individual major donors and organized facilitation and financial support networks—remain a mainstay of al-Qa`ida financing.

7 *Terrorist Financing*, Financial Action Task Force, February 29, 2008, p. 14.

8 Personal interview, UK counter-terrorism official, March 6, 2008.

9 Personal interviews, French intelligence officials, March 25, 2008.

### Charities

According to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), “the misuse of non-profit organizations for the financing of terrorism is coming to be recognized as a crucial weak point in the global struggle to stop such funding at its source.”<sup>10</sup> While Treasury reports that many of the charities al-Qa`ida has relied on in the past as a source of funds have been disrupted or deterred from continuing such activity,<sup>11</sup> the department has also noted that charities serving as fronts for terrorist groups often open up under new names soon after they are shut down.<sup>12</sup> According to the Justice Department, intelligence indicates that terrorists continue to use charities as sources of both financial and logistical support.<sup>13</sup> British officials concur. According to a joint UK Treasury/Home Office report, a “significant proportion” of terrorist finance investigations in the United Kingdom during 2006 included analysis of links to charities. The report found that “the risk of exploitation of charities is a significant aspect of the terrorist finance threat.”<sup>14</sup>

### Individual Major Donors

Speaking in the Gulf, Treasury Undersecretary Levey noted that “terrorist organizations and al Qaeda raise money in the Gulf by going to individual donors and through charities.”<sup>15</sup> This was evident in 2006, when Treasury designated as a terrorist financier Abd al-Hamid al-Mujil, executive director of the Eastern Province office of the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), described by fellow jihadists as the “million dollar man” for his support of Islamic militant groups. According to declassified information underpinning his designation, al-Mujil boasted a long history of financing al-Qa`ida and its Southeast Asian affiliates, the Abu Sayyaf Group and Jemaah

Islamiyah.<sup>16</sup> In January 2007, Treasury designated Farhad and Junaid Dockrat, two South African al-Qa`ida financiers. Farhad funded al-Qa`ida and the Taliban through an al-Qa`ida charity on the UN 1267 committee’s terrorism list, and

## **“The reverse directional flow of funds appears to support the assessment that the al-Qa`ida leadership is increasingly unable to fund itself.”**

Junaid raised \$120,000 for then-al-Qa`ida operations chief Hamza Rabi’a.<sup>17</sup> In January, the United Nations listed three Kuwaitis—Hamid al-Ali, Jaber al-Jalamah and Mubarak al-Bathali—as al-Qa`ida financiers. Designated a year earlier by the U.S. Treasury Department, the three actively recruited and financed al-Qa`ida activities, including the group’s activities in Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>18</sup>

### Organized Support Networks

In the period following 9/11, multiple support networks were identified, in Europe in particular, that supplied logistical and financial support to the September 11 plot. The tactic of positioning organized networks of facilitators in key locations continues to be employed by al-Qa`ida today, especially in providing support for al-Qa`ida in Iraq (AQI). In February, the Treasury Department designated four members of a key terrorist facilitation and finance network operating out of Syria for supporting AQI. Treasury reported that the “Abu Ghadiyah” network, named for its leader Badran Turki Hishan al-Mazidih (known as Abu Ghadiyah), controls the flow of much of the money, weapons, personnel and other material through Syria into Iraq for AQI. According to the Treasury Department, the network “obtained false

passports for foreign terrorists, provided passports, weapons, guides, safe houses and allowances to foreign terrorists in Syria and those preparing to cross the border into Iraq.” Indeed, Badran reportedly received several hundred thousand dollars from his cousin, another member of the Abu Ghadiyah financial and logistical facilitation network, with which he supported insurgent activity targeting the U.S. military and facilitated the travel of AQI foreign fighters.<sup>19</sup>

### Senior Leaders Low on Funds?

Despite these various means of raising funds, recent cases suggest that the al-Qa`ida senior leadership is lacking funds. In Bahrain, for example, a five-member cell was convicted in January for terrorist activities, including receiving explosives and weapons training, engaging in terrorism overseas and terrorism financing targeting “friendly countries.” According to Bahraini investigators, several of the cell members traveled from Bahrain to training camps in Afghanistan via Iran. One of the individuals who returned to Bahrain was successfully prosecuted after acknowledging that he had traveled to Afghanistan to fight coalition forces. Cell members also twice delivered funds to al-Qa`ida operatives in Afghanistan, according to Bahraini officials. The funds appear to have been self-generated, totaled only a few thousand dollars, and were sent not from al-Qa`ida’s leadership to a terrorist cell abroad, but from a budding terrorist cell to al-Qa`ida leaders in Afghanistan.<sup>20</sup>

The reverse directional flow of funds appears to support the assessment that the al-Qa`ida leadership is increasingly unable to fund itself. Indeed, anecdotal evidence that has come to light sporadically during the past few years suggests that the al-Qa`ida leadership has been impecunious for some time. In his July 2005 letter to Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi, Ayman al-Zawahiri humbly asked the leader of al-Qa`ida in Iraq if he could spare “a payment of approximately one hundred thousand” because “many of the lines have been cut off.” Similarly, in May 2007, al-Qa`ida leader in

10 *Terrorist Financing*, Financial Action Task Force, February 29, 2008, p. 11.

11 “Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Stuart Levey Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Finance,” U.S. Department of Treasury, April 1, 2008.

12 David R. Sands, “Iran Uses Fronts to Evade US Sanctions,” *Washington Times*, June 13, 2007.

13 Glenn R. Simpson, “Islamic Charities Draw More Scrutiny,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 23, 2008.

14 *The Financial Challenge to Crime and Terrorism*, HM Treasury, February 28, 2007, p. 52.

15 “Millions of Dollars May Fund Terrorism,” *Gulf Daily News*, February 27, 2008.

16 “Treasury Designates Director, Branches of Charity Bankrolling Al Qaida Network,” U.S. Department of Treasury, August 3, 2006.

17 “Treasury Targets Al Qaida Facilitators in South Africa,” U.S. Department of Treasury, January 26, 2007.

18 “Treasury Designations Target Terrorist Facilitators,” U.S. Department of Treasury, December 7, 2006.

19 “Treasury Designates Members of Abu Ghadiyah’s Network Facilitates Flow of Terrorists, Weapons, and Money from Syria to al Qaida in Iraq,” U.S. Department of Treasury, February 28, 2008.

20 Personal interviews together with Michael Jacobson, Bahraini law enforcement officials, January 30, 2008.



Afghanistan Shaykh Sa`id Mustafa Abu'l-Yazid highlighted the group's desperate need for funds:

As for the needs of the jihad in Afghanistan, the first of them is financial. The mujahidin of the Taliban number in the thousands, but they lack funds. And there are hundreds wishing to carry out martyrdom-seeking operations, but they can't find the funds to equip themselves. So funding is the mainstay of jihad. They also need personnel from their Arab brothers and their brothers from other countries in all spheres: military, scientific, informational and otherwise...And here we would like to point out that those who perform jihad with their wealth should be certain to only send the funds to those responsible for finances and no other party, as to do otherwise leads to disunity and differences in the ranks of the mujahidin.<sup>21</sup>

In a recent case in Saudi Arabia, a taped message from Ayman al-Zawahiri distributed via cell phones asked for "donations for hundreds of the families of captives and martyrs in Pakistan and Afghanistan." Saudi authorities subsequently arrested some 56 individuals suspected of belonging to al-Qa`ida who were using the recording to raise funds.<sup>22</sup>

Investigations in Europe and Asia offer other examples of local cells raising funds for themselves as well as sending funds to Pakistan. In Spain, for example, authorities see Pakistani jihadists involved in petty crime through which they not only finance their activities in Spain, but also send millions of dollars back home, some of which is suspected of financing extremist groups there.<sup>23</sup> In Singapore, a "self-radicalized" cell leader collected contributions from fellow cell members with the intent of sending the money as a donation to support violent causes abroad.<sup>24</sup>

21 Evan Kohlmann, "Al Qaida Leader in Afghanistan Begs for Cash Donations," Counterterrorism Blog, May 25, 2007, available at [www.counterterrorismblog.org](http://www.counterterrorismblog.org).

22 "Saudi Says Arrests Qaeda Suspects Planning Attacks," Reuters, March 3, 2008.

23 Elaine Sciolino, "Terror Threat From Pakistan Said to Expand," *New York Times*, February 10, 2008.

24 "Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Moro Islamic Liberation

### Financial Indicators of a Changing al-Qa`ida?

When it comes to financing al-Qa`ida and its affiliated components of the global jihadist movement, much has changed even as much has stayed the same. For instance, a recently declassified August 1993 report, "The Wandering Mujahidin: Armed and Dangerous," written by the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), described several

## **"What remains to be seen is whether the al-Qa`ida senior leadership's lack of funds degrades the core group's power to control activities and direct operations."**

trends that remain issues of serious concern today, including some of the same streams of financial support that continue to finance today's militant Islamist groups. To the present-day reader, who would digest this 1993 report with an eye toward the conflict in Iraq, perhaps the most disturbing analytical judgment is the following:

The war-era network of state sponsors and private patrons which continues to support the mujahidin has no rigid structure and no clearly defined command center, but receives guidance from several popular Islamic leaders and financial support from charitable Islamic organizations and wealthy individuals. Key figures who have emerged as the mentors of the mujahidin provide one another with the contacts and conduits needed to keep the militant groups they support in business.

The network circa 1993 was not an exact parallel to today's combination of al-Qa`ida operatives (a smaller, but no less committed cadre) and like-minded followers of a virtually-networked, leaderless jihad. Yet, the 1993 warning of an unstructured network of jihadists moving from their current area of operations to other battlefronts could

Front (MILF) Detention and Restriction Order Cases," Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs, January 28, 2008.

have been written today. What remains to be seen is whether the al-Qa`ida senior leadership's lack of funds degrades the core group's power to control activities and direct operations. Without the power of the purse, would local terrorist cells still need the al-Qa`ida core as much as that core would need these cells? Part of what drew the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat in Algeria into the al-Qa`ida fold, according to intelligence analysts, was the financial dividend of such a relationship.<sup>25</sup> Should this trend continue, it could lead to the further degeneration of the al-Qa`ida core and the devolution of al-Qa`ida's organized global insurgency into a more localized—and controllable—terrorist threat. Toward that end, and in light of recent successes disrupting and deterring al-Qa`ida's finances, constricting the terrorist operating environment—with an eye toward al-Qa`ida's financial streams in particular—should remain a strategic priority.

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25 Personal interviews, Mideast intelligence analysts, July 9, 2007.

## The UK's Experience in Counter-Radicalization

By James Brandon

IN LATE APRIL, a new British Muslim group called the Quilliam Foundation, named after Abdullah Quilliam, a 19<sup>th</sup> century British convert to Islam, will be launched with the specific aim of tackling “Islamic extremism” in the United Kingdom. Being composed entirely of former members of Hizb al-Tahrir (HT, often spelled Hizb ut-Tahrir), the global group that wants to re-create the caliphate and which has acted as a “conveyor belt” for several British jihadists, the Quilliam Foundation represents a significant departure from conventional counter-radicalization efforts. If successful, it may become an important model for tackling Salafi-jihadi ideologies in Western Europe and in the United States.

The group's launch reflects the mixed results of previous British counter-radicalization efforts that have been dominated by conflict between Salafist Islamists and their secular Sufi rivals. These groups disagree substantially over the causes of Islamic extremism. On the whole, Islamist groups blame British foreign policy, Islamophobia and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for radicalizing young Muslims; Sufi groups acknowledge that these are contributing factors, but blame extreme Salafist ideologies for transforming these grievances into a literal *casus belli*.

### “Preventing Extremism Together”

One of the earliest government attempts to encourage Muslims to tackle Islamic radicalism were the “Preventing Extremism Together” consultations. Held soon after the July 7, 2005 London bombings, the consultations brought together prominent Muslims and asked them to investigate the causes of the bombings and suggest ways to prevent future attacks. The discussions were dominated by members of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), an umbrella group of Muslim organizations mainly run by supporters of Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), the South Asian equivalent of the Muslim Brotherhood, who packed the consultations with fellow Islamists. As a result, the consultations' conclusions, published in October 2005, denied that Salafist ideologies played any role in

the July 7 bombings and blamed British foreign policy, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and “Islamophobia” for the attacks.<sup>1</sup> They recommended that the government tackle Islamic extremism by altering foreign policy and increasing the teaching of Islam in schools. Haras Rafiq, a Sufi member of the consultations, said of the meetings: “It was as if they had decided what their findings were before they had begun; people were just going through the motions.”<sup>2</sup>

### Sufi Muslim Council

As a direct result of witnessing the Islamists dominate the Preventing Extremism Together consultations, Haras Rafiq established his own group called the Sufi Muslim Council (SMC). It was launched on July 19, 2006 at an event attended by Hazel Blears, the minister for Communities and Local Government.<sup>3</sup> Rafiq said that he set up the SMC because he was frustrated that government efforts

**“In many cases, the most outspoken and influential of these critics were former extremists.”**

to tackle extremism had been repeatedly hijacked by Islamists and was angry that their attempts to make political Islam synonymous with the Islamic religion were damaging the faith as a whole. Rafiq hoped the SMC would tackle Islamist influence over government policy and, through grassroots work, give young Muslims a strong secular Sufi identity that would inoculate them against Salafi-jihadi thought. From its inception, however, the SMC suffered damaging attacks by established Muslim groups that accused it of being unrepresentative, having “neo-con” links and supporting government anti-terrorism policies.<sup>4</sup>

1 *Preventing Extremism Together: Working Group Report August-October 2005*, available at [www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/152164](http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/152164).

2 Personal interview, Haras Rafiq, London, February 2008.

3 “Launch of the Sufi Muslim Council,” Department of Communities and Local Government, July 19, 2006, available at [www.communities.gov.uk/speeches/corporate/sufi-muslim-council](http://www.communities.gov.uk/speeches/corporate/sufi-muslim-council).

4 For an example of such criticism, see the article “Finally Exposed! The Sufi Muslim Council” on the website

Rafiq admitted that he was unprepared for the hostility—or effectiveness—of these Islamist attacks:

The Islamists are highly-organized, motivated and well-funded. The relationships they've made with people in government over the last 20 years are very strong. Anyone who wants to go into this space needs to be thick-skinned; you have to realize that people will lie about you; they will do anything to discredit you. Above all, the attacks are personal—that's the way these guys like it.

In spite of this, Rafiq was able to gain access to senior members of government, including Tony Blair, the then-prime minister, and urged them to re-think the government's deepening dependence on groups such as the MCB. Despite such successes at a policy-making level, however, the abuse directed at Rafiq—including death threats—gradually deterred others from speaking on behalf of the group, creating the impression that, in the words of one Muslim blogger, the SMC was “an outfit whose membership could probably fit on one piece of furniture.”<sup>5</sup>

### Freelance Counter-Terrorism Efforts

Although the SMC became widely discredited among many British Muslims, by mid-2006 the group had broken the Islamists' stranglehold over government policy and emboldened Muslim secularists. In many cases, the most outspoken and influential of these critics were former extremists. In mid-2006, Shiraz Maher, a former mid-ranking member of HT, became the first to denounce his former ideology, writing newspaper articles and fronting television documentaries explaining how the ideas of HT and other Islamists lead to terrorism. Inevitably, he was attacked by HT and also received death threats. Similarly, in the summer of 2007, Ed Husain, a local leader of HT in East London during the 1990s, published a book, *The Islamist*, about his experiences, providing not only an insider's view of HT, but also describing Jamaat-i-Islami's attempts to monopolize Islamic practice

of the Muslim Public Affairs Committee UK (MPACUK) on February 8, 2006, available at [www.mpacuk.org/content/view/2816/35/](http://www.mpacuk.org/content/view/2816/35/).

5 “Hunt Down the Sufis?” Indigo Jones Blog, December 17, 2007.

in London's heavily Muslim East End. Although Husain—like Maher and Rafiq—came under assault from Islamist groups that sought to intimidate and discredit him, his bestselling book circumvented the Islamists to explain to the British public how Islamist teachings can lead to violence.

Others also renounced their former views. Hassan Butt, a former al-Muhajiroun member who helped British jihadists join the Taliban during 2001-2002, renounced his former views and claimed to have begun de-radicalizing former jihadists in Manchester.<sup>6</sup> As

**“The Quilliam Foundation is expected to pose the biggest threat to radical Islamists thus far when it launches on April 22.”**

a result, he was reportedly stabbed by other al-Muhajiroun members. He now plans to co-publish a book on his experiences later this summer. Others include Usama Hasan, a Salafist imam in East London, who denounced Muslim “pacifists” in 2001 and had joined the Afghan mujahidin to fight the country's communist government in 1990. Now, however, Hasan has become a prominent opponent of Salafi-jihadi ideologies—using his jihadist past to win credibility with his congregation, while continuing to identify himself as a Wahhabi. Hasan does not argue merely that jihadist attacks on the United Kingdom are only undesirable at present; instead, he challenges the theology behind such violence. For instance, he has challenged the use of *kafir* (heathen), calling the term intrinsically derogatory, and says that Islam prohibits the killing of all and any non-combatants, arguing that theological justifications for attacks against Israeli citizens inevitably open the door to similar attacks in Western countries. “Others argue that this terrorism is just counter-productive; I'm arguing that it's wrong and immoral and evil,” he said.<sup>7</sup>

6 Ed Husain, “If Words Could Kill Me,” *New Statesman*, June 14, 2007.

7 Personal interview, Usama Hasan, London, December 28, 2007.

Others also felt emboldened to stand up to pro-jihadist organizations. For example, Musa Abu Bakr Admani, the Muslim chaplain of London Metropolitan University, a former stronghold of groups such as HT, independently took action to challenge student extremists. Admani has said that he took action himself after the government ignored his request for assistance.<sup>8</sup> By early 2008, his efforts had begun to succeed; on March 11, members of the campus' Islamic Society complained on the radical website [islambase.co.uk](http://islambase.co.uk) that they were no longer able to invite extremist preachers to their events because of Admani's influence.<sup>9</sup>

**Quilliam Foundation**

The Quilliam Foundation is expected to pose the biggest threat to radical Islamists thus far when it launches on April 22. Funded by Muslim donors, it is entirely composed of former HT members who have renounced their former beliefs. Its director is Majid Nawaz, formerly one of HT's most prominent members who gained celebrity status within the group after being jailed for three years in Egypt before being released in early 2007. In addition, the group's deputy director is Ed Husain, while Usama Hasan sits on the group's advisory council. Also involved is Rashid Ali, a former director of HT's secret command structure who wrote and edited many of the group's publications. “To refute or criticize Islamism as an ideology, it's important to have people who have been involved in it,” Nawaz explained. “People on both sides of spectrum still don't understand what Islamism is about. We can understand and explain this ideology because we were training people in it.”<sup>10</sup>

Once operational, Nawaz said that Quilliam will argue that Islamism is “the biggest form of extremism” and also “put out ideas regarding how to counter the Islamist narrative.” While Islamist groups often aim to defend political Islam from criticism, Nawaz says Quilliam aims to protect Islam itself from being associated with violence and refute arguments that Islam itself is the source of terrorism:

8 “Islamic Radicalisation,” BBC Radio 4, November 14, 2006.

9 Post entitled “Speakers needed!!!!!!” [islambase.co.uk](http://islambase.co.uk), March 11, 2008.

10 Personal interview, Majid Nawaz, London, March 20, 2008.

If people of both sides of the equation are saying Islam is the problem, then we can point to the biggest theologians who are around today who are saying that Islam can and is adapting to these problems. From a policy perspective, it is key to say that Islam isn't the problem. If you say that Islam is the problem then you're basically saying that 1.5 billion people are the problem.<sup>11</sup>

Unlike the SMC, the Quilliam Foundation will launch without government backing. Instead, its launch will be attended by a range of prominent Muslim leaders, including Ali Goma, the mufti of Egypt. According to Nawaz, “In the Muslim community, it's important to have theologians with us if we're going to

**“The most committed opponents of extremism are often former radicals who are best able to explain the attractions and implications of radical Islam.”**

make progress.” In this respect, as in others, the group aims to learn from the mistakes of previous groups, keeping its distance from the government, working within the Muslim community and using the “extremist” background of the group's members to earn vital credibility among young British Muslims.

**Conclusion**

It is too early to judge the ultimate success of British counter-radicalization efforts. It is clear, however, that Muslim secularists are increasingly successful in finding ways to challenge jihadist ideologies. The Quilliam Foundation itself illustrates several important lessons of the British experience in combating extremism:

- The most committed opponents of extremism are often former radicals who are best able to explain the attractions and implications of radical Islam.
- Radical Islam's most ardent opponents are often pious Muslims who are motivated by a desire to protect Islam from being

11 Ibid.

associated with violence and hatred.

- While Islamists regularly work closely with the government without losing influence in Muslim communities, reformists are often more successful if they keep their distance from government.

Nevertheless, many challenges remain. Hundreds of mosques and Islamic schools around the country are run by highly conservative members of the Deobandi and Salafist traditions, while Islamist groups frequently enjoy levels of foreign funding that their secularist and Sufi rivals cannot match. Furthermore, many politicians—particularly on the left—are willing to support Islamists in return for their support in elections. Despite this, it is clear that increasing numbers of secular Muslims are stepping forward to question jihadist ideologies regardless of the personal risk. One important outcome of this is that Islamists no longer monopolize the interpretation of Islam and can no longer portray their version of Islam as more genuine than others. Haras Rafiq said, “A few years ago the Islamists were able to say that their’s was the only version of Islam and no one would contradict them; I don’t think that’s any longer the case.” In other words, counter-radicalization efforts are not only tackling terrorism, but are also aiding the development of a more pluralistic, tolerant and, indeed, recognizably “Western” version of Islam.

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## AQIM’s Expanding Internationalist Agenda

By Andrew Black

IN LATE JULY 2007, Algerian press outlets reported on the defection of a former member of al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). This individual, named Abdelkader Ben Messoud, alias Abu Daoud, was a former senior member of the group’s wing operating in the Sahara, and the account he related to journalists depicted an organization riven by disputes about the group’s new direction.<sup>1</sup> According to Abu Daoud, one of the key sources of dissent within AQIM’s ranks was over the decision by the group’s *amir*, Abdelmalek Droukdel, alias Abu Mus`ab `Abd al-Wadud, to merge with al-Qa`ida in September 2006 and thus redirect the group’s focus from a nationalist to an internationalist agenda.

The proceeding seeks to determine the balance AQIM has found between these two competing views. To do this, the article presents the findings from two studies: a quantitative content analysis of the group’s statements, and a data analysis of attacks by the group. The article will proceed by providing a brief synopsis of AQIM, its legacy and the merger with al-Qa`ida. Following this, the essay will outline the methodology and present the findings from each study. Finally, context and a threat assessment will be provided setting the findings against the current environment in North Africa.

### An Evolving Movement

The Islamist opposition to the current Algerian government, of which AQIM is only a recent manifestation, has its roots in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the Islamist movement, led by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), was poised to win the majority vote in the 1991 general elections. Rather than accept a ruling Islamist party, the Algerian military nullified the elections in January 1992, touching off a period of hostilities, initially led by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), that has endured almost uninterrupted.<sup>2</sup>

While the source of the violence was a national political event, the campaign waged by the GIA through much of the 1990s took on an international element. Algerian groups, such as the GIA, conducted various types of operations abroad, ranging from procurement to plotting and conducting attacks, especially within Europe. Throughout the conflict and despite incorporating a number of veteran Afghan mujahidin, the rhetoric and operational orientation of the movement largely remained focused on effecting change in the Algerian polity. After 2001, however, elements within the Algerian jihadist movement began to exhibit signs of a shift toward a more international orientation, manifesting in professions of allegiance to Usama bin Ladin and the al-Qa`ida leadership.<sup>3</sup>

This shifting dynamic was accentuated in September 2006 when Ayman al-Zawahiri announced the official merger between al-Qa`ida and the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). While this event and the group’s subsequent renaming to al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb indicated al-Qa`ida’s growing interest in North Africa, it also pointed to the GSPC’s shifting focus away from nationalist ambitions toward a more internationalist agenda. What remained to be determined was the balance the GSPC’s and later AQIM’s leaders would strike between these competing views.

### Content Analysis

For the current study, 33 statements issued by the GSPC and AQIM from March 2005 through March 2008 were reviewed and coded for content. The statements were collected from the Open Source Center (OSC) and the Site Institute, and each statement was coded for specific references to either national or international terms. Examples of national terms include references to Algeria’s government, security services and any other terms that indicate a desire to change the national polity or which respect national borders. This view aligns with the nationalist ambitions of groups such as the GIA and the GSPC. References to foreign governments and people were coded individually and in the aggregate are considered to fall within an internationalist perspective, a perspective which roughly comports with the vision

1 Geoff Porter, “Splits Revealed Inside Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb,” *Terrorism Monitor* 5:17 (2007).

2 Hugh Roberts, *The Battlefield Algeria 1988-2002* (New York: Verso, 2003).

3 “Algerian Group Backs al-Qaeda,” *Jane’s Intelligence Digest*, October 23, 2003.

of al-Qa`ida and the global jihadist movement. Important components of this view are a focus on attacking the “far enemy,” while rejecting the Westphalian state model and national borders.

The analysis also relied upon two key assumptions. First, it is assumed that statements issued by the group, especially its key leadership, are indicative of the overall emphasis placed on key strategic issues; the frequency of terms used is assumed to correspond to the group’s priorities and in total would indicate whether the group leans more toward a nationalist or an internationalist campaign. When compiled, the data should portray the evolution of the group’s priorities and be informative as to AQIM’s future direction. The second assumption underlying the analysis is that Abu Mus`ab `Abd al-Wadud has remained the *amir* of the organization since before March 2005 and that he speaks for the majority of the group’s members. Significant doubt has been cast on this assumption in recent months, as several reports from the Algerian media have suggested that al-Wadud was deposed in 2007.<sup>4</sup> These reports, however, appear to be misleading since al-Wadud continued to be featured on AQIM’s website through December 2007 and on videos released in spring 2008.<sup>5</sup>

The findings from the content analysis represent a group that, while still predominately focused on Algeria, is nonetheless shifting its focus from a nationalist to an internationalist agenda, as illustrated in Figure 1. The most dramatic shift can be seen in the group’s identification of the West and Israel. Prior to the September 2006 merger with al-Qa`ida, AQIM makes specific mention to Algeria just under five times more than Israel and Western countries. In the period following the merger, that figure is cut almost in half, and since September 2007 the ratio of references to Algeria versus the West and Israel stands at just two to one, a 48% reduction since before the merger. This is a dramatic strategic shift for the organization as a whole and

indicates an overall process of realigning the organization’s objectives to comport with al-Qa`ida’s own views.

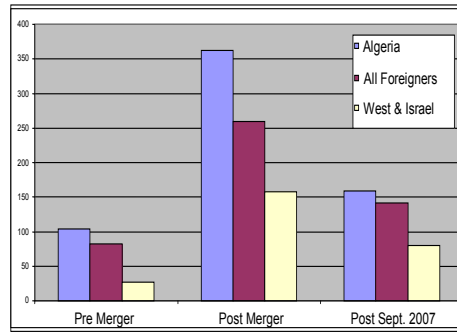


Figure 1. This figure depicts how AQIM’s rhetoric has evolved from March 2005 through March 2008. The bar represents the number of references made to each variable.

**Data Analysis**

To provide the findings from the content analysis with context, a data analysis was conducted of attacks by both the GSPC and AQIM from 2006 through March 2008. The methodology employed for the data analysis was similar to that of the content analysis. A dataset of 96 attacks by both the GSPC and AQIM was compiled from the U.S. National Counter-Terrorism Center’s Worldwide Incidents Tracking System (WITS). The coding principals employed were the same as in the content analysis. The dataset was increased to a total of 107 with the inclusion of events from 2008 by the author. It must be noted that one inherent drawback to using the WITS data is that it largely omits failed and disrupted plots, such as the December 2006 plot in Tunis, Tunisia. Rather, these data portray only those attacks which were both successfully executed and reported in the media.

The results of the data analysis similarly portray a group that is shifting its targeting preferences from nationalist to internationalist personnel and assets, as illustrated in Figure 2. Of the 33 events which occurred prior to the GSPC’s merger with al-Qa`ida, 29 targeted national assets against just one international asset.<sup>6</sup> Since the September 2006 merger, however, this ratio of nationalist to internationalist attacks reduces to seven to one. Since September 2007, the same month in which Ayman al-Zawahiri called for the expulsion of Western influence from the Maghreb, the trend accelerated to the point that now one in three attacks

by the group targets an international asset. Examples of such attacks include the December 2007 bombing of the UN building in Algiers, and the February 2008 kidnapping of two Austrian tourists in Tunisia.

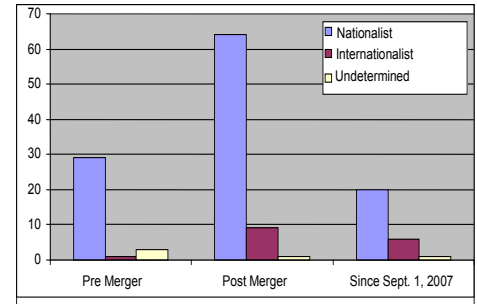


Figure 2. This figure depicts the number of successful attacks by the GSPC and AQIM from January 2006 through March 2008.

**Implications of the Data**

Both the content and data analyses demonstrate the escalating emphasis on internationalist targets, and in the aggregate confirm the notion that AQIM is moving closer into alignment with al-Qa`ida’s worldview. The implications of the findings in this article are significant for the other North African countries as well. Countries such as Tunisia and Mauritania, upon which AQIM has focused in the past, are likely to become increasingly popular targets. In Tunisia, AQIM has devoted attention specifically to the tourism industry, which is an important element of that country’s economy. This point was made salient most recently in the ongoing hostage crisis involving two Austrian tourists. In Mauritania, it appears to be not only tourism but also that country’s diplomatic relations with Israel that draw AQIM’s ire. Two months prior to the February 2008 attack on the Israeli Embassy in Nouakchott, AQIM released a statement claiming an attack on the Mauritanian military: “This operation has come at a time during which the sky of our beloved Nouakchott is still polluted with the fluttering of the Israeli flag” and while the Mauritanian government continues to support the “Crusaders” militarily and by hosting the Dakar Rally.<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, aside from the growing threat to Western interests in North Africa, AQIM’s statements indicate

4 “Algerian-based al-Qa`idah Leader said Deposed; Regional ‘Emirs’ Replaced,” *Liberte*, September 18, 2007; “Al-Qa`idah in Maghreb Algerian Leader ‘Replaced,’” *El Khabar*, October 3, 2007.

5 AQIM’s website qmagreb.org was removed following the December 2007 attacks in Algiers; “Lovers of the Houris,” AQIM martyrdom video, March 27, 2008.

6 Four events were coded as “not applicable,” as they were against former GSPC members and their families.

7 OSC, “Al-Qa`ida in Lands of Islamic Maghreb Claims ‘New Victories’ in Algeria, Mauritania,” January 1, 2008.

an intention, though not necessarily a capability, to strike within Europe, a point which has been echoed by numerous European security officials.<sup>8</sup> The EU's counter-terrorism coordinator, Gilles de Kerchove, noted recently that Europe faces a "real threat" from "the rallying to al-Qaeda of groups like the Salifist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group."<sup>9</sup> Thus, while AQIM continues to maintain a strong commitment to effecting change within Algeria, the growing internationalist rhetoric and shifting targeting preferences indicate that the group is in the process of realigning its priorities to be in accordance with al-Qa`ida's strategy of targeting the "far enemy," and therefore presents a greater threat to the West.

### Conclusion

This article has set out the findings of a quantitative content analysis of GSPC and AQIM rhetoric between March 2005 and March 2008. In addition and to provide context, a data analysis of the group's attacks was presented. In sum, the analyses show the group's rhetoric has focused proportionally more on the international arena than have its successful attacks. Nonetheless, the trends in both analyses show that since the September 2006 merger with al-Qa`ida and despite reportedly deep internal dissent, the group has progressively shifted to a stronger focus on an internationalist agenda. This transition has altered security in North Africa and may have implications for the West as well.

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<sup>8</sup> "German Spy Chief Warns of Al-Qaida's Growing Strength in North Africa," *Der Spiegel*, March 25, 2008; "New EU Counterterrorism Coordinator says al-Qa`idah is Main Threat to Europe," *De Standaard*, November 6, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> "EU Faces 'Real Threat' From North Africa: Anti-Terror Tsar," AFP, April 7, 2008.

## Nanomanagement: A Challenge to Those Combating Terrorism

By Major Tommy Sowers, U.S. Army

IN 1998, AS PART of my officer training, I recall watching a short promotional video about the future of my profession. The video starred a rotund colonel sitting in a command post of the future. The colonel shouted out orders as he literally armchaired a distant battle, watching it unfold on video monitors. The explosion of an enemy vehicle formed the triumphant conclusion. I remember thinking the actor in particular was comical, and the lesson somewhat confusing, wedged as it was between lessons promoting junior officer leadership and initiative. Yet, in the summer of 2006 in Baghdad's command center, I found myself watching the same scenario unfold in real time. I watched as a general barked orders, surrounded by plasma screens, using Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) feeds to vector in air and ground forces on a target 20 miles away. With a staff of dozens at his side, he gave commands as specific as "Follow that second truck" and "Tell them, it is the house in the center of the compound," while continually asking his legal officer, "Do you see hostile intent?" The general authorized, coordinated, executed and managed an operation foreseen eight years earlier.

Information has always been valuable in war. The difference today is in the dramatic reduction of its cost. Information Technology (IT) employed on the modern battlefield (e-mail, UAV feeds, video conferencing, GPS, vehicle trackers, sensors) enables the highest levels of an organization to directly influence and monitor the very lowest levels of an organization at increasing speeds and decreasing costs.

Much has been written about al-Qa`ida's use of modern IT and the subsequent power it draws from this medium.<sup>1</sup> More than utilizing IT, many terrorist organizations have either been forced

or voluntarily transformed in their organizational structure from traditional hierarchies to networks, or "networks of networks."<sup>2</sup> Where terrorists can readily adopt network structures, for traditional hierarchical professional militaries "the challenge will be to discover how to combine hierarchical and networked designs to increase their agility and flexibility for field operations."<sup>3</sup> Decentralization to widely dispersed units, delegation of tasks once controlled in the center, empowerment of the most junior levels of an organization and encouraging initiative are all hallmarks of both network structure and counter-insurgency strategy, yet anathema to what occurred in the Baghdad command center.

The term micromanagement has long been used to describe a supervisor that closely monitors and controls the actions of his immediate subordinate. Today, we see nanomanagement, or the ability of a supervisor to closely monitor and control the actions of all subordinates throughout an organization. This raises three critical questions. Where did nanomanagement originate? Why is it done? What are its costs?

### Military Origins of Nanomanagement: Combating Networks with Networks

The military's efforts to respond to networked enemies fall under the moniker of Network-Centric Warfare (NCW). NCW seeks information superiority, enabled by IT, and "generates increased combat power by networking sensors, decision-makers, and shooters to achieve shared awareness, increased speed of command, high tempo of operations, greater lethality, increased survivability, and a degree of self-synchronization."<sup>4</sup> Moreover, "no less than the embodiment of DoD transformation," NCW provides much of the explanation behind the extensive adoption of networking tools, UAVs and sensors employed in the contemporary military arsenal.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Gabriel Weimann, *How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, "Information, Power, and Grand Strategy: In Athena's Camp—Section 1," in David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla eds., *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1997), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *The Implementation of Network-Centric Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2005), pp. 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> "Network Centric Warfare," Department of Defense

Early advocates of NCW recognized the potential hazards of the military rapidly adopting IT, including “increased potential for information overload, second guessing, micromanagement, stifling of initiatives and distraction.”<sup>6</sup> Where information once was in short supply, a torrent of data now deluges and potentially paralyzes, and “inserting new technology into old systems and organizations may create new inefficiencies, even as some current activities become more efficient or effective.”<sup>7</sup> Decision-makers must now process an abundance of information and also decide “when to stop collecting and waiting for information and when to take action.”<sup>8</sup>

The issue of inefficiencies from monitoring persists in varied forms of literature—principal-agent theory, delegation theory, management theory and transaction costs. The common view throughout is that monitoring comes at a cost both to

## “Nanomanagement threatens the essential quality of professional organizations—trust.”

the monitored and the monitor. For the monitored, time spent quantifying efforts, writing situation reports or reporting to higher command is time spent off delegated tasks. Furthermore, persistent monitoring reduces the risks taken by subordinates, reducing their discretion and pushing up many decisions once made at their level. For the monitor, time processing the deluge of information, or waiting for a more accurate and timely report, comes at a cost. For Leonard, “Truth on the battlefield costs time, lives and supplies. Ignorance is free.”<sup>9</sup> Now

that senior leaders can nanomanage a distant action, when everyone rushes to the sounds of the guns, who is planning, who is thinking, who is directing what will occur when those guns go silent?

### Why Nanomanagement?

With these costs, why nanomanage? There are three explanations. Some claim that uncertainty conditions the level of monitoring. Wilson argues that when effort and outcomes are clear, authority can be pushed to the front line. Yet when fighting networks, few pitched battles are fought, front lines formed or penetrated, or progress of winning hearts and minds easily measured. In these uncertain environments, “more discretionary authority in an agency is pushed upward to the top.”<sup>10</sup>

In the past, perfect information was limited by time, distance and technology, leading Clausewitz to state, “In war everything is uncertain.”<sup>11</sup> Through this fog of war, commanders have peered, leading Van Creveld to argue that “from Plato to NATO, the history of command in war consists essentially of an endless quest for certainty” about the environment, enemy and “last but definitely not least, certainty about the state, intentions, and activities of one’s own forces.”<sup>12</sup> From these thoughts, nanomanagement can be seen as just another in a long line of efforts to dissipate the fog of war. A UAV feed or hourly reports can easily be justified in providing at least the patina of certainty.

Another explanation sees monitoring as less a response to uncertainty, but motivated by liability and accountability and a natural result of an “accountability culture”<sup>13</sup> and “the audit explosion.”<sup>14</sup> With increasing levels of scrutiny, both by superiors and persistent media, “If the administrator is going to get into trouble for what an operator does, the

former will find ways of making the decision for the latter.”<sup>15</sup> Actions must be visible, traceable, quantified, known and ultimately defensible.

Occam’s razor might explain a third and most troubling cause for persistent monitoring by distant superiors—they can, so they do. In professions, especially in the military, senior officers rise through the ranks. Now at the pinnacle of their careers, the tasks of generals shift toward tasks of budget, management, external relations, long-term planning and administration. In short, as professionals rise in organizations, they do less work that forms the heart of the profession.

The ability to nanomanage now allows these senior officers a choice—work on the budget and watch endless PowerPoint slides, or fire a Hellfire missile and watch the action on a plasma. When taking action defines the profession, where the warrior ethos is inculcated, technology now allows those distanced to drift into the fight. Indeed, with the industrial revolution, complexity, distance and scale forced generals to retreat from the front lines. Today, however, the information revolution allows them to stride back to the virtual front.

### Nanomanagement and Professions:

#### A Question of Trust

While the above costs and justifications may impact any organization, nanomanagement threatens the essential quality of professional organizations—trust. Wilson summarizes the differences between a bureaucratized and a professionalized workforce in terms of the monitoring of their work, or how much they are trusted. Where the former is highly supervised, the latter focuses on restrictive hiring but once hired leaves the professionals to their methods.<sup>16</sup> More trust equals less monitoring and less costs, a fundamental benefit of training, recruiting and investing in professionals as opposed to bureaucrats.<sup>17</sup>

Report to Congress, July 27, 2001.

6 David S. Alberts, *Information Age Transformation: Getting to a 21st Century Military*, *Information Age Transformation Series* (Washington, D.C.: DoD Command and Control Research Program, 2002), p. 9.

7 Norman C. Davis, “An Information-Based Revolution in Military Affairs,” in David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla eds., *In Athena’s Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1997), p. 81.

8 Alberts, *Information Age Transformation: Getting to a 21st Century Military*, p. 57.

9 Robert R. Leonard, *Principles of War for the Information Age* (New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 1998), p.

252.

10 James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), p. 133.

11 Carl von Clausewitz, Michael Eliot Howard and Peter Paret, *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 156.

12 Martin L. Van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 264.

13 Onora O’Neill, *A Question of Trust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

14 Michael Power, *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

15 Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*, p. 133.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 149.

17 Jeffrey H. Dyer and Wujin Chu, “The Role of Trustworthiness in Reducing Transaction Costs and Improving Performance: Empirical Evidence from the United States, Japan, and Korea,” *Organizational Science* 14:1 (2003).

Furthermore, professionals are trusted to use qualitative judgment as opposed to quantitative assessment.<sup>18</sup> The subjective is the purview of the professional. The rise of IT-enabled monitoring, and the insistence on quantifying both efforts and outputs can be seen as an encroachment on professional judgment. How does one quantify and report the shaykh's tone, or how a neighborhood feels? For professions, O'Neill sees the impact of constant monitoring and accounting of actions as severe, "*distorting the proper aims of professional practice* (original emphasis) and indeed as damaging professional pride and integrity."<sup>19</sup> When a senior leader nanomanages a distant battle, or demands ever more accurate and by definition quantified reports, they take back the autonomy so central to professional work.

### Conclusion

Nanomanagement—to overcome uncertainty, as a response to increasing accountability, or simply because it provides an escape from the mundane—brings with it costs to any organization. For professional organizations, nanomanagement threatens trust, the *sine qua non* of what it means to be a professional. When fighting networks, adoption of networking technology is not enough. This must be concomitant with organizational change focusing on empowerment and delegation, not centralization and monitoring. In the contemporary fight, the challenge will be learning the right lessons from the rotund colonel.

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18 Gary A. Klein, *The Power of Intuition: How to Use Your Gut Feelings to Make Better Decisions at Work* (New York: Currency/Doubleday, 2004).

19 O'Neill, *A Question of Trust*, p. 50.

## After Action Report: Politics 101 for Small Units in Counter-Insurgency

By Major Jeremy Gwinn, U.S. Army

THE KEY ROLE that politics play in counter-insurgency finally became clear to me in the spring of 2006, as my soldiers and I escorted a delegation of Ghazaliyya's Sunni clerics onto a minibus, compliments of the Iraqi National Police. My rifle company's area of operations in western Baghdad had seen its share of turmoil during the previous months. Home to a mixed population of Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, the Ghazaliyya neighborhood was hit hard by sectarian violence following the February bombing of Samarra's Askariyya Shrine. My battalion, 1-87 Infantry of 1-10 Mountain Division, was recalled within days to quell the chaos after having handed over the area to Iraqi forces the previous December. Now, struggling to find an Iraqi solution to Ghazaliyya's security ills, my company was in the midst of a gradual transition to the National Police force. The largely Shi'a police were perceived as illegitimate among the area's Sunni population, which was being terrorized by vengeful Shi'a militias. Reports abounded of abuse at the hands of the National Police, whom many viewed as simply a de facto wing of Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army.

On that spring morning, the shaykhs, several members of Ghazaliyya's neighborhood advisory council and I made our way to the police brigade headquarters across town to visit the commander and tour the detention facility. The day's visit did not cause an outbreak of peace throughout Ghazaliyya, but was a small step toward improved police performance and dialogue with local leaders. The religious shaykhs, with whom I met regularly, significantly toned down their vitriol toward the police force. Instead of pronouncing that "the police must leave Ghazaliyya at once," the shaykhs' message changed to "this is what the police must do to gain our acceptance." Without a doubt, the police colonel understood the tremendous influence wielded by the shaykhs and, seeing the validity in many of their complaints, the need to professionalize his force or continue to fuel the violent backlash of Ghazaliyya's

Sunni citizens against his men.<sup>1</sup>

I cannot take credit for the visit or any progress that was made since the idea was the council's, not my own. Yet between the Iraqi security forces on one side, and the shaykhs and the neighborhood

**"As posited by the bulk of classic insurgency literature, political engagement is critical in this kind of war."**

council on the other, I became the only person willing to initiate dialogue. That day, I saw the value of months of work with the local council and eventually the shaykhs, a duty I had initially considered a mere distraction.

As posited by the bulk of classic insurgency literature, political engagement is critical in this kind of war. This truth holds not only at the national level, but locally as well. My experience with Iraqi local politics is limited to 2005 and 2006 within western Baghdad. Political systems outside urban areas function differently, and clearly the advent of the Sons of Iraq and similar groups has brought a markedly new dynamic to the environment. Yet, the small unit COIN practitioner should continue to find relevance in the following lessons when taken in context and adapted to his/her unique situation.

### Realistic Expectations

What should a small unit leader expect to achieve through the local political organization in his AO? At the platoon, company and even battalion level, host-nation political goals often seem distant—beyond our ability to influence. At our level, the neighborhood advisory councils may appear to be ineffective, dysfunctional or even criminal, which in some cases is accurate on all three counts. Nonetheless, by accepting the cultural differences and establishing realistic expectations, small unit leaders can make important gains for their counter-

1 While some readers may view this as legitimizing attacks against ISF as a negotiating tool, a pragmatic counter-insurgency approach must acknowledge the leverage of such influential actors.



insurgency effort, particularly in the areas of governance, Information Operations (IO) and intelligence.

#### Governance

In addition to representing the U.S. military, leaders should take the advisor role with the local council. In the conduct of Civil Affairs projects, we often saw council members make requests without a willingness to do any legwork to make them happen. In cases like these, we learned that the council's active cooperation should be a requirement, except in emergency situations or those carrying an unacceptable physical risk to the council members. In doing so, the council takes ownership of the project and is forced to function as an organization. My unit's policy eventually required that all project requests must move through Iraqi channels. In practice, this meant the local council could no longer make requests to the U.S. representative. Instead, they sent project requests through the district advisory council, which could then draw on U.S. resources. While this slowed the start of a project, it exercised and strengthened the Iraqi organization at multiple levels and was the preferred technique for most projects.

Another way small unit leaders can aid governance is by improving the internal decision-making process. Early in my unit's tour, the council decided they could no longer tolerate the incompetence and corruptness of the chairman who had, among a host of other transgressions, stolen the new furniture from the council building for use in his own home. Not wanting to offend him, they waited until the chairman missed a meeting to vent their frustrations on me. The council members indicated indirectly that they wanted to replace him, but they wanted it to be my decision. I informed the council that I would not make such a decision and recommended they vote on the matter. This seemingly obvious solution took the council by surprise, but they voted and the chairman was dismissed. The same scene was repeated several more times on lesser matters, and again, a nudge toward making a decision was needed to stop otherwise endless debate.

#### Information Operations

Merely rehashing talking points from a note card is certainly a missed opportunity for meaningful IO. Without adjustment for local context and integration into a

broader communications plan, IO themes are blunt, ineffective tools. Moreover, local leaders do not want to be lectured by the newest Westerner to appear in their neighborhood. Official IO themes should underpin our communications and be tailored to the local situation, but certainly not constitute the extent of small unit IO. Equally important is countering insurgent IO.

At one meeting, several days after my soldiers discovered a weapons cache attached to a mosque, a council member angrily accused my men of desecrating it. In truth, my men uncovered the cache outside the wall, prompting our

### **“Without adjustment for local context and integration into a broader communications plan, IO themes are blunt, ineffective tools.”**

sister Iraqi unit to search inside, where they discovered additional contraband weapons. U.S. soldiers never entered the mosque's walls. When confronted with the truth, which I pointed out could be backed up by video, the agitated council members backed down and admitted that perhaps their second-hand report was wrong. My error in this case was not involving the council leadership sooner, even engaging them while the operation was still in progress. I generally heard the same themes from the council as from ordinary citizens on the street, and therefore regarded the council as a reliable indicator of public sentiment. When combined with the religious shaykhs, I believe the group's ability to influence the population was significant.

Small unit leaders should consider using a counter-insurgent's version of a customer service approach when working with the council. As far as OPSEC and common sense will allow, it is our responsibility to keep local leaders informed of our units' activities, sending the message that we respect their institutions and want them to be in charge. This comes not from a sense of friendship, but recognition of the group's influencing power and the imperative to strengthen the institution. We began by

only updating the council on U.S.-funded projects, but eventually broadened this to include combat operations.

Week after week, I appeared at council meetings and was predictably greeted by one or two weeping mothers, wondering why my soldiers had detained their sons. The weekly scenes were arranged and officiated by the council chairman, who created a deliberate spectacle to showcase our supposed injustice. I tried my best to justify our actions, but, in this forum, was not positioned for success. After several months, I tried a new approach. My company, with several Iraqi Army platoons, was conducting multiple raids involving five or six houses at night, with the objective of detaining about 10 targeted individuals. Before the operation began, I envisioned the lineup of insurgents' mothers at the council meeting several days later, so I decided to be proactive. In the early morning hours immediately following the operation, after ensuring there were no remaining OPSEC constraints, I placed a cell phone call to the council chairman. To my amazement, he already knew about our operation and was glad to talk. I briefed him on each detainee, telling him why he was detained and his likely timeline through the Iraqi justice system. At our next meeting, there were no weeping mothers. Instead, the chairman, empowered with information, dealt with the families individually and without a scene.

We often heard complaints about the local Iraqi police during council meetings. My initial course of action was to take note of the grievances that seemed valid and later confront the police chief. I soon saw this procedure as a wasted effort, so I convinced the police chief to attend a council meeting, opening a line of communication that had not previously existed. When the National Police came to town, this same procedure evolved into a formal weekly security meeting between the National Police brigade commander, the local council and several religious shaykhs. The Iraqi colonel typically received a tongue-lashing at these meetings, but began establishing goodwill by making noticeable changes in police procedure, such as improving the treatment of women at checkpoints. Perhaps most importantly, the shaykhs acknowledged these improvements.

### Intelligence

Small units will not typically glean groundbreaking intelligence from the local council, but they can gather valuable information that contributes to the overall intelligence picture. Being aware of the internal divisions present in the council, I was usually skeptical when one of the members made an accusation against another. I regarded one member, however, as particularly reliable, and took seriously his confidential report about another member's son who he believed was conducting attacks for the Mahdi Army. A visit to the son's home the next day by one of my platoons turned up a supply of hand grenades and eventually revealed that the son's place of work was a major hub of Mahdi Army activity.

Following the Askariyya Shrine bombing and the subsequent spike in sectarian violence, the Sunni shaykhs looked to the U.S. military for security assistance. As a result of relationships built through the local council, several of the shaykhs began calling me frequently with reports of Mahdi Army activity. One mosque in particular was the target of frequent drive-by shootings, so the shaykh called me directly via cell phone when he spotted suspicious activity on the street outside. As a result, my patrols more effectively disrupted the shooters and reduced the attacks on the mosque. As always, counter-insurgents need to be wary of traps disguised as tips. Still, I found that tips given by people we knew were much higher quality than anonymous tips because the informant's reputation was on the line. In the case of political or religious leaders, we are not only accessing the observations of one person, but a deep network of contacts. Caution is still necessary, however, as the tendency for vendettas and rivalries among prominent leaders is also higher, and they may attempt to lead counter-insurgents astray for these purposes.

### Additional Considerations

In addition to establishing realistic goals for their work with the local council, small unit leaders should bear in mind several other factors.

#### *The Council as a Target*

Depending on the local threat situation, and other factors such as demographics, some council members will likely be targets of the insurgency. During my unit's tour, the Ghazaliyya council experienced

an attempted double assassination, a successful assassination and a kidnapping ending in assassination. For a council of approximately 10 members, this represented a 40% attack rate. All of the attacks, except for the kidnapping, took place in the vicinity of the council building. Following the kidnapping/assassination, the council essentially broke down for several weeks out of fear. We eventually resumed meeting in a more secure part of the city, but only later moved back into Ghazaliyya at my urging. In order to better secure the council

**“The general lesson for small unit leaders is that religion will be intertwined with politics, and a comprehensive political approach requires recognition of this fact.”**

and boost the members' confidence, my company significantly reinforced the physical defenses of the council building, including concrete barriers and firing platforms for the small Iraqi guard force. I also issued the members handguns and weapons cards for personal protection.

#### *Internal Conflicts*

As mentioned earlier, internal conflicts were a persistent issue. Prior to my first council meeting, the chairman furtively waved me into his office and proceeded to accuse more than half of the other council members of insurgent activity. Later, I found that some of the accusations contained a hint of truth, but overall this was just a clumsy attempt to put me in his camp and alienate the other members. Week after week, the accusations and counter-accusations became a regular occurrence, as various members attempted to pull me aside before meetings or call my cell phone late at night. I cannot offer an easy solution to this problem, other than attempting to filter out the bad information and demonstrating that you will not be manipulated for the sake of personal rivalries. As work with the council progresses, counter-insurgents will gradually learn the appropriate level of trust to afford each member, and the amount of finger-pointing will decline

when they realize it is not bearing fruit.

#### *Allegiances*

Counter-insurgents should not assume that council members are solely loyal to their constituents, nor should they assume that loyalties are divided neatly by religious sect. Expect that most council members are affiliated with political parties, which may have loose connections to militia groups or insurgent organizations.<sup>2</sup> In my experience, council members view themselves as politicians first, avoiding direct involvement with militia or insurgent activity. Nonetheless, they often have knowledge of illicit activity, but will not, of course, freely share this information. Every situation is different, but confrontation on the issue or posing an “us or them” ultimatum will generally not end in the counter-insurgent's favor. At a minimum, we should be keenly aware of possible outside allegiances among council members and attempt to leverage their influence with these external groups.

#### *Religious Influence*

As indicated earlier, the religious shaykhs came to play a major role in our work with the Ghazaliyya council. I quickly learned that shaykhs from the local Sunni mosques were major influencers with the chairman behind the scenes. The clerics and I eventually commenced regular meetings, which several council members also attended. The shaykhs never attended actual council meetings, but did attend the security meetings held with the police. Despite my best efforts, I was unable to convince the Shi`a clerics to participate. I recognize that intentionally bringing clerics into political activities may have its downside, not least of all the appearance of favoritism from only having the Sunni sect represented. In this situation, however, I determined the benefit of having Sunni shaykhs interface with the Shi`a-dominated police force outweighed any appearance of one-sidedness. The general lesson for small unit leaders is that religion will be intertwined with politics, and a comprehensive political approach requires recognition of this fact.

<sup>2</sup> From my observations, militia or insurgent groups with which council members may be involved are usually of the “local resistance” variety, many of which have since been co-opted through the CLC/SOI programs, as opposed to irreconcilable terrorist organizations such as al-Qa`ida and its affiliates. This distinction is critical.

*The Initial Testing Period*

Counter-insurgent leaders could ideally operate in the same area with the same local leaders for the duration of the conflict. Unfortunately, with the nature of “the long war,” we rotate frequently, and local leaders will see a fresh Western face approximately each year. With this, there is a tendency to initially “try out” the new commander, testing his limits of generosity, tolerance and naiveté. My only recommendation is to expect this and set an appropriately firm tone from the outset. A high quality relief-in-place will also mitigate problems.

**Conclusion**

Work with host-nation political organizations is among the most frustrating and least rewarding activities of counter-insurgents. Particularly at the local level, clear measures of success are elusive; we must simply be satisfied with small steps. While it is impossible to say with certainty, I am highly confident that my company’s work with the Ghazaliyya council significantly contributed to the local counter-insurgency effort. Perhaps the benefit to combat operations was minimal, but along other lines of operation—such as IO, essential services and governance—the impact was significant. We will always need to kill or capture certain individuals, but a sole focus on these activities is generally counter-productive. Small unit leaders, particularly company commanders, can deal the harshest blows to an insurgency by not only conducting direct action and securing the populace, but also by dedicated and astute political engagement.

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**Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity**

March 15, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide car bomber targeted a NATO-led convoy near the town of Khost in Khost Province. Two civilians were killed and a NATO soldier wounded. – *Reuters, March 15; Voice of America, March 15*

March 15, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): After a series of Taliban attacks on mobile phone infrastructure, a phone company official announced that at least one of the country’s four cell phone companies would heed a Taliban demand to cease operations at night. The Taliban demanded the action on February 25, stating that coalition forces track Taliban movement through cell phone signals. – *Reuters, March 15*

March 15, 2008 (GERMANY): According to German newspapers, a suicide bomber who killed two U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan’s Khost Province on March 3 may have been a 28-year-old German-born Turk. The reports were based on a claim of responsibility from the Islamic Jihad Union. – *Spiegel Online, March 15*

March 15, 2008 (THAILAND): A car bomb exploded at a car park adjacent to the CS Pattani Hotel in Pattani Province, killing at least one person and injuring more than 10. The luxury hotel is often used by government officials. – *AFP, March 15*

March 15, 2008 (THAILAND): A man was killed after two bombs exploded prematurely in his vehicle in Yala Province. It is suspected that the man was planning to conduct an attack. – *Reuters, March 15*

March 15, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani militant commander Faqir Muhammad offered his government a cease-fire if it refrained from supporting President Pervez Musharraf. – *Dawn, March 16*

March 15, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Four American FBI personnel were wounded after militants bombed a restaurant at which they were eating in Islamabad. In addition to the wounded FBI personnel, one Turkish aid worker was killed in the attack. – *AP, March 16*

March 16, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suspected militant leader, known by the single name of Noorullah, was killed, along with

approximately 20 others, near Wana in South Waziristan Agency after his home was destroyed by a series of missiles. According to Pakistani intelligence officials, another home was also destroyed during the attack. It is suspected that an unmanned aerial drone, or other U.S. aircraft, executed the attacks. – *AP, March 16; New York Times, March 17*

March 16, 2008 (NORTH AFRICA): Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb, which is holding two Austrian tourists hostage, extended a deadline for their demands to be met in exchange for the hostages’ release. – *Reuters, March 16*

March 16, 2008 (IRAQ): The U.S. military announced that al-Qa`ida in Iraq is increasingly using suicide vests to conduct attacks. According to a U.S. military spokesman, “There has been an increase over time in the use of suicide vest bombers. Late in 2007 there were about eight or 10 a month; in the month of February, there were 18. There is an increase...We are also seeing that average Al-Qaeda fighters are wearing suicide vests and before they are captured they are often blowing themselves up.” – *AFP, March 16*

March 17, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghan authorities apprehended Taliban commander Maulvi Dastagir in Herat Province. Dastagir was identified as a commander in neighboring Badghis Province. – *Pajhwok Afghan News, March 17*

March 17, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Four NATO soldiers were killed after their convoy was hit by a suicide car bomber in Helmand Province. – *AFP, March 16*

March 17, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): According to NATO, approximately 12 insurgents were killed in an airstrike in Helmand Province. – *AP, March 18*

March 17, 2008 (IRAQ): More than 40 people were killed in Karbala Province after a female suicide bomber targeted Shi`a worshippers. – *AP, March 17*

March 17, 2008 (PAKISTAN): At least two police officers were killed after a suicide bomber detonated his explosives at a police compound in Swat District in the North-West Frontier Province. – *AP, March 17*

March 18, 2008 (UNITED STATES): The U.S. State Department announced that the Somali group al-Shabab has been added to its list of designated terrorist organizations. According to the statement, "Al-Shabaab is a violent and brutal extremist group with a number of individuals affiliated with Al-Qaeda. Many of its senior leaders are believed to have trained and fought with Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan." The decision to designate the group, the statement reads, was made on February 29. - *AFP, March 18*

March 18, 2008 (UNITED STATES): The U.S. State Department advised Americans to avoid travel to southern Thailand. The announcement came after a series of attacks in the country's southern provinces, including a March 15 car bomb at the CS Pattani Hotel in Pattani Province, a hotel that is frequented by foreigners. - *AP, March 18*

March 18, 2008 (YEMEN): Bomb blasts struck a girls' school near the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a, killing a schoolgirl and a policeman. U.S. officials believe that the mortars were directed at the embassy, but hit the school by mistake. - *AFP, March 19*

March 19, 2008 (THAILAND): Security forces killed two suspected insurgents in Raman district of Yala Province. Authorities allege that one of the men was a core leader of the Runda Kumpulan Kecil militant group. - *Bangkok Post, March 19*

March 19, 2008 (SOMALIA): In response to a March 18 decision by the U.S. State Department to place al-Shabab on the U.S. list of designated terrorist organizations, al-Shabab spokesman Shaykh Muktar Robow told reporters, "We are happy that the U.S. put us on its list of terrorists, a name given to pure Muslims who are strong and clear in their religious position." Robow claimed that the U.S. government is against al-Shabab because it is "fighting against Ethiopia, a Christian nation that had invaded our country." - *AP, March 19*

March 19, 2008 (SOMALIA): Shaykh Hassan Dahir Aweys, a top leader in the Council of Islamic Courts, denied that al-Shabab is linked to terrorists such as al-Qa`ida and insisted that the fighters "are part of the coalition for the re-liberation of Somalia." According to Aweys, "The U.S. policy toward Somalia is always

wrong and twisted. They made the wrong decision in 2006 when they backed the Ethiopian invasion and they are wrong to designate part of the resistance as terrorists." - *AP, March 19*

March 19, 2008 (FRANCE): The seven men of the "19th arrondissement" cell went on trial in Paris and are charged with recruiting French men on behalf of al-Qa`ida and sending them to fight in Iraq. Authorities believe that the men managed to send 10 fighters to Iraq, three of whom may have died there. The cell members were arrested in 2005, and they now face up to 10 years in prison if found guilty. - *AP, March 19*

March 19, 2008 (IRAQ): Iraqi security forces apprehended Ahmad Muhammad Taha in Ba`quba in Diyala Province. Taha was identified as an al-Qa`ida member who confessed to killing 20 people. - *UPI, March 19*

March 19, 2008 (IRAQ): A female suicide bomber detonated her explosives in Balad Ruz of Diyala Province, killing four people. The bomber apparently targeted a police patrol. - *Voice of America, March 19*

March 19, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide car bomber targeted an Iraqi army building in Mosul, Ninawa Province, injuring 14 people. - *AP, March 19*

March 19, 2008 (GLOBAL): A new audio recording with the purported voice of Usama bin Ladin appeared on jihadist internet websites. In the recording, Bin Ladin threatened the European Union for publishing editorial cartoons mocking the Prophet Muhammad. "Your publications of these drawings—part of a new crusade in which the Pope of the Vatican had a significant role—is a confirmation from you that the war continues," Bin Ladin said. He warns the EU that it is "testing Muslims" by publishing the cartoons, and that "the answer will be what you shall see and not what you hear." - *Reuters, March 20*

March 20, 2008 (GLOBAL): Al-Jazira broadcast audio excerpts from a speech attributed to Usama bin Ladin, in which he denounced Israel-Palestine peace negotiations and stated that "Palestine cannot be retaken by negotiations and dialogue, but with fire and iron." Bin Ladin also said, however, that mujahidin who cannot fight against Israel should instead

join al-Qa`ida in Iraq since "the nearest field of jihad today to support our people in Palestine is the Iraqi field." According to the Associated Press, "There was no indication how recently the recording was made, or if it was an unreleased part of the audio posted late Wednesday on an extremist Web site that has carried al-Qa`ida statements in the past." - *AP, March 20*

March 20, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): The UN Security Council agreed to extend the mandate of its mission in Afghanistan—known as UNAMA—until March 2009. The mission will also "strengthen the cooperation with" the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force "at all levels and throughout the country." - *AFP, March 20*

March 20, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Five soldiers were killed after a suicide car bomber drove his explosives-laden vehicle into the gates of the primary army base in South Waziristan Agency. - *Daily Times, March 21*

March 20, 2008 (SOMALIA): Al-Shabab leader Shaykh Muktar Robow, responding further to the U.S. decision to designate al-Shabab on its list of terrorist organizations, told reporters that "we were not terrorists. But now we've been designated...we have been forced to seek out and unite with any Muslims on the list against the United States." - *Reuters, March 21*

March 21, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Golab Mangal, the new governor of Helmand Province, told reporters that he wished to negotiate with "second- and third-tier" Taliban militants in order to stabilize the region. He also stressed, however, that the invitation does not extend to "foreign-affiliated," top-tier militants. - *RFE/RL, March 21*

March 21, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Two coalition soldiers were killed after a roadside bomb destroyed their vehicle near Kandahar city in Kandahar Province. - *AFP, March 23*

March 21, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani authorities shut down three FM radio stations in the Swat Valley. The stations were shut down after they broadcast a speech by a pro-Taliban cleric, Maulana Fazlullah. - *Voice of America, March 21*

March 21, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): Philippine Marines killed a suspected Abu Sayyaf Group fighter in Barangay Pansol in Patikul, Sulu Province. – *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, March 23

March 21, 2008 (YEMEN): The Jund al-Yaman Brigades, or The Soldier's Brigade of Yemen, which is linked to al-Qa`ida, claimed responsibility for the March 18 mortar attack on the U.S. Embassy. The attack failed to hit the embassy and instead struck an adjacent girls' school. According to the claim of responsibility, which was posted on the internet, "one of the mortars missed its target and fell in a school close to the embassy. We pray to God to speed the girl students' recovery." – *Asbah al-Awsat*, March 25

March 22, 2008 (IRAQ): U.S. military spokesman Rear Admiral Greg Smith told reporters that in the past year authorities had killed and apprehended 39 al-Qa`ida members charged with producing and spreading propaganda materials in Iraq. As a result, al-Qa`ida's propaganda activities have been degraded. According to Smith, "We think the vast majority of this media network has been degraded at this point." – *Reuters*, March 22

March 22, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghan and NATO air and ground operations in Dihrawud district of Uruzgan Province resulted in the deaths of "dozens of terrorists," according to the Afghan Defense Ministry. The estimate of the number of militants killed surpassed 40. – *AFP*, March 23

March 22, 2008 (YEMEN): Yemen's *al-Thawra* newspaper, citing a security official, said that al-Qa`ida operative Hamza al-Dhayany was behind the March 18 bomb attack against a girls' school near the U.S. Embassy in Sana`a. According to the official, "Dhayany launched rockets that were mounted on a car toward the school." The United States believes that the attack targeted the U.S. Embassy. – *AFP*, March 22

March 23, 2008 (YEMEN): Yemen's Interior Ministry denied March 22 press reports that al-Qa`ida was behind the March 18 bomb attack against a girls' school near the U.S. Embassy in Sana`a. The March 22 press report was published in the state-run *al-Thawra* newspaper. – *Saba*, March 23

March 23, 2008 (YEMEN): Yemen extradited to Saudi Arabia four Saudi militants suspected of being al-Qa`ida operatives. – *AFP*, March 28

March 23, 2008 (SINGAPORE): Singaporean authorities announced that they arrested a member of Jemaah Islamiyah in February who they allege trained with Muslim fighters in Afghanistan. The suspect was identified as Rijal Yadri Jumari, and it is believed that he trained at an al-Qa`ida camp in Kandahar in 2000 where he learned explosives, surveillance, weapons handling and other guerrilla warfare techniques. It is also alleged that he met Usama bin Ladin on more than one occasion. – *AP*, March 23

March 23, 2008 (IRAQ): At least 13 Iraqi soldiers were killed after a suicide car bomber targeted a military base in Mosul, Ninawa Province. Soldiers attempted to stop the vehicle with weapons fire, yet the suicide bomber's vehicle was equipped with bullet-proof glass. – *AP*, March 23

March 23, 2008 (IRAQ): The U.S. military announced that it has disrupted a "suicide bombing network" in Diyala Province, with 12 terrorists killed in the raid. According to the statement, six detained men had their bodies shaved in preparation for their suicide operations. – *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, March 23

March 23, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Approximately 65 people were injured after Islamic militants used an IED to blow up a series of fuel tankers in Landikotal in Khyber Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The tankers were supplying fuel for U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, and a total of 36 were destroyed. – *AFP*, March 23

March 23, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): International and Afghan forces killed 12 Taliban-linked fighters in Chora district of Uruzgan Province. – *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, March 25

March 24, 2008 (GLOBAL): A new statement by al-Qa`ida operative Ayman al-Zawahiri appeared on Islamist websites in which he calls on Muslims to "strike the interests of the Jews, the Americans, and all those who participated in the attack on Muslims. Monitor the targets, collect money, prepare the equipment, plan with precision, and then—while relying on

God—assault, seeking martyrdom and paradise." Similar to a recent statement by Usama bin Ladin, in the tape Zawahiri focuses on the need to retaliate for Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip. – *AP*, March 24

March 24, 2008 (THAILAND): Police arrested a suspect in the March 15 bomb attack on the CS Pattani Hotel. The suspect was identified as Muden Sameng, and he was arrested in Pattani Province's Panare district. It is alleged that Muden is a member of the Runda Kumpulan Kecil militant group. – *Thai News Agency*, March 24

March 24, 2008 (THAILAND): Exiled Pattani United Liberation Organization leader Lukman B. Lima told the Associated Press that "peace talks cannot be held [with Thailand's new government] under the conditions of war, military aggression and occupation." – *AP*, March 24

March 24, 2008 (NORTH AFRICA): Press reports quoted a new statement by al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb in which they provide a new deadline for their demands to be met in exchange for the release of two Austrian hostages. The terrorist group was quoted as saying, "It is an additional extension of two weeks that will expire on Sunday, April 6, 2008, at midnight." After that date, "we will have exhausted what we could bear. Let Austria, Tunisia and Algeria be responsible for the lives of the kidnapped." The group has demanded the release of imprisoned militants, and Austrian media sources have reported that the group is also demanding five million euros in ransom. – *AFP*, March 24

March 25, 2008 (ISRAEL): Israeli forces arrested Hamas operative Umar Jabar, who is wanted for planning the 2002 Passover suicide bombing in Netanya that left 30 Israelis dead and more than 140 wounded. Jabar was apprehended in a West Bank village. – *CNN*, March 26

March 26, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A Danish soldier was killed during a firefight with Taliban fighters in Helmand Province. – *AFP*, March 27

March 26, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A car bomb exploded at a farmers' market in Helmand Province, killing eight civilians. The bomb was detonated remotely. – *AFP*, March 26; *AP*, March 26

March 26, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): The FBI began a six-month counter-intelligence training program in the southern Philippines to assist Philippine police and military forces in their efforts against the Abu Sayyaf Group and Jemaah Islamiyah. – *AFP, March 26*

March 26, 2008 (SOMALIA): Al-Shabab fighters briefly took control of the strategic town of Jowhar, which lies 55 miles north of Mogadishu. According to the *Washington Post*, al-Shabab has in the past month “briefly asserted control of at least six towns in southern Somalia.” – *Washington Post, March 27*

March 27, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A new internet posting by the Taliban warns of the start of a spring offensive against government and international troops in Afghanistan. The posting was authored by Mullah Bradar Akhund, and says, “Our aim in these operations is to give the enemy an admonishing lesson through conclusive and painful strikes that he does not anticipate, until he knows and is compelled to end the occupation of Afghanistan and withdraw until the last soldier leaves.” – *Reuters, March 27*

March 29, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban militants bombed a power station in Girishk district of Helmand Province, which resulted in the deaths of two people. – *Reuters, March 29*

March 29, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghan and international troops killed eight Taliban fighters in Zabul Province. – *AFP, March 30*

March 29, 2008 (PAKISTAN): The first of six joint U.S., Afghan and Pakistani military intelligence centers on the Afghan-Pakistan border was opened. The purpose of the centers is to limit the ability of militants to move and conduct operations in the region. According to U.S. Brigadier General Joe Votel, “The macro view is to disrupt insurgents from going back and forth, going into Afghanistan and back into Pakistan, too. This is not going to instantly stop the infiltration problem, but it’s a good step forward.” – *AP, March 29*

March 29, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani told his country’s lawmakers that “we are ready to talk to all those people who give up arms and are ready to embrace peace.”

The offer, directed at Islamist militants inside the country, was welcomed by one of the major militant groups, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). According to TTP spokesman Maulvi Omar, “We welcome the announcement by the federal government to hold talks with Taliban Tehrik to improve law and order situation in the country.” Omar added, however, that “the government should immediately say goodbye to pro-U.S. policies because there is no good in them for the government and the people of Pakistan.” – *AFP, March 30*

March 30, 2008 (GLOBAL): CIA Director Michael Hayden told reporters that al-Qa`ida is training operatives in Pakistan’s tribal areas who “look Western” and “would be able to come into this country [the United States] without attracting the attention others might.” Speaking of Pakistan’s tribal areas and the border region with Afghanistan, he said, “If there is another terrorist attack, it will originate there.” – *Bloomberg, March 30*

March 30, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Two British Marines were killed after an explosion destroyed their vehicle while they were on patrol near Kajaki Dam in Helmand Province. – *AP, April 1*

March 31, 2008 (UNITED STATES): The U.S. military charged a Guantanamo Bay detainee with involvement in the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombing in Tanzania. The Tanzanian suspect, identified as Ahmad Kalfan Ghailani, was apprehended in July 2004 and transferred to Guantanamo in 2006. He could face the death penalty. – *AP, March 31*

March 31, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban commander Mullah Naqibullah, who has escaped from prison in Afghanistan on two separate occasions, was apprehended by Afghan police after a gun battle which left three militants dead and two policemen injured. The incident occurred in Helmand Province. – *AP, April 1*

April 1, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Two police officers were killed after a suicide car bomber attacked a police compound in the town of Zaranj in Nimroz Province. – *AP, April 1*

April 1, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): According to a posting on Islamist websites, two recent Taliban attacks

on Dutch forces in Afghanistan were in retaliation for Dutch MP Geert Wilders’ film *Fitna*, which is highly critical of Islam. The film was released on March 27. The post alleges that the retaliatory attacks took place on March 30; the Dutch Defense Ministry stated that two separate attacks on March 30 wounded five Dutch soldiers. – *Reuters, April 1*

April 1, 2008 (ALGERIA): Algerian newspapers reported that authorities recently foiled a plot by al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) to assassinate the country’s prime minister, Abdelaziz Belkhadem. According to reports, AQIM operatives planned to assassinate the prime minister when he was vacationing at his holiday home in Marsa bin Mahdi, which is in Tlemcen Province. – *AKI, April 1*

April 1, 2008 (TURKEY): Turkish police detained 45 suspected al-Qa`ida-linked individuals in various locations in Istanbul. – *Reuters, April 1*

April 1, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): A Department of Education executive was kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf Group in Maimbung. Reportedly a ransom is being demanded for his release. – *Philippine Daily Inquirer, April 1*

April 1, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): The U.S. Embassy warned American citizens to avoid travel to the Zamboanga City area since “extremist elements may be planning to kidnap Americans or other foreigners at hotels or other public places.” U.S. counter-terrorism troops are based in Zamboanga and on the nearby Jolo Island. – *AP, April 1*

April 1, 2008 (UNITED STATES): FBI Director Robert Mueller told a congressional hearing that al-Qa`ida is attempting to recruit Westerners so that its operatives can have valid North American and European passports, allowing them to enter the United States without arousing as much suspicion. – *AFP, April 6*

April 1, 2008 (SOMALIA): Al-Shabab fighters allegedly took control of the central Somali town of Buulo Burte, and in the process killed an estimated 22 government soldiers, according to witness accounts. – *CNN, April 4*

April 2, 2008 (SOMALIA): Al-Shabab fighters withdrew their forces from the town of Buulo Burte in advance of a convoy of Ethiopian reinforcements. The fighters had taken control of the town on April 1. - *CNN, April 4*

April 2, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): The Abu Sayyaf Group released a Department of Education official who they had kidnapped the previous day. It is believed that a ransom was paid by the official's family in exchange for his release. - *Philippine Daily Inquirer, April 2*

April 2, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber killed at least five people at a checkpoint in the Addayah area near Mosul, Ninawa Province. - *AP, April 3*

April 2, 2008 (MAURITANIA): Sidi Ould Sidna, an al-Qa`ida-linked man accused of killing four French tourists in December 2007, escaped from a Mauritanian courthouse. - *AP, April 3*

April 3, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani authorities arrested four Turkish nationals who are suspected of being tied to al-Qa`ida. The men were traveling on a bus from Quetta to Peshawar when they were arrested. Frontier Corps personnel who made the arrest found explosives, sub-machine gun ammunition, a laptop, jihadist books and other materials. - *Dawn, April 4*

April 3, 2008 (GLOBAL): A new audiotape began circulating on Islamist websites in which al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri makes efforts to deny that his movement kills civilians. Zawahiri was responding to a question posed by an individual on an Islamist website, in which the questioner asked about al-Qa`ida attacks that have killed civilians in Muslim states such as Iraq, Algeria and Morocco. Zawahiri explained that the deaths of innocents are caused by "unintentional error" and because the enemy uses innocents as "human shields." Zawahiri also mentioned the December 2007 attack by al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb against a United Nations building, saying that the "United Nations is an enemy of Islam and Muslims." Finally, Zawahiri said that Usama bin Ladin is "healthy and well." - *CNN, April 3*

April 3, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): Philippine Brigadier General Juancho Sabban told reporters that the Abu Sayyaf Group

(ASG) has been weakened by leadership and funding problems, in addition to having to counter continuous U.S.-backed attacks on their fighters. According to Sabban, "They [ASG] haven't been able to come up with a single, influential leader who can unite the different factions." - *AP, April 3*

April 4, 2008 (SOMALIA): According to Somalia's Shabelle Media Network, al-Shabab fighters took control of Biyo Ade village, which is north of Mogadishu. - *CNN, April 4*

April 4, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A new video of Taliban commander Jalal al-Din Haqqani was sent to news organizations. According to the Associated Press, Haqqani appeared in the video for "the first time after seven years in hiding." - *ABC News, April 7*

April 4, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): France offered to send 700 more troops to Afghanistan to combat the Taliban insurgency in the east. According to reports, the troops will allow the United States to reinforce the current troops in southern Afghanistan. - *Bloomberg, April 4*

April 4, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber killed two policemen and a civilian in Lashkar Gah of Helmand Province. It is believed that the attack was in retaliation for the March 31 arrest of Mullah Naqibullah; one of the dead policemen was the commander responsible for Naqibullah's arrest. - *Reuters, April 4*

April 4, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A Canadian soldier in NATO was killed after his vehicle hit a roadside bomb in Kandahar Province. - *AFP, April 5*

April 4, 2008 (IRAQ): Approximately 15 people were killed after a suicide bomber targeted a funeral for a policeman in al-Sadiyah in Diyala Province. - *AFP, April 4; AP, April 4*

April 5, 2008 (IRAQ): At least four people were killed after a bomb exploded on a minibus in Baghdad. - *AP, April 5*

April 5, 2008 (SOMALIA): A group of militants used a public transportation bus to execute a surprise attack on government police at a checkpoint in Mogadishu's Hodan district, which resulted in the deaths of two police officers. - *Garowe Online, April 5*

April 5-6, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): Police and military forces killed a top Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) leader in Sulu Province. The leader, Sam Andal, was identified as a logistics and liaison officer for ASG. - *GMANews.TV, April 6; Sun Star, April 7*

April 6, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): NATO and Afghan forces killed 10 Taliban militants in Uruzgan Province. The men were killed after they engaged a joint NATO-Afghan patrol in Charchino district, a hotbed of Taliban activity. - *Reuters, April 7*

April 6, 2008 (IRAQ): Coalition forces apprehended 22 suspected al-Qa`ida fighters in central and northern Iraq. - *UPI, April 6*

April 6, 2008 (YEMEN): Three rockets were fired at a residential housing complex for Westerners in Sana`a. The complex houses foreign U.S. and Arab oil workers. Initial reports showed no casualties, and it is believed that the Jund al-Yaman Brigades, an al-Qa`ida-linked group, were likely responsible for the attack. - *AFP, April 7*

April 7, 2008 (SOMALIA): A roadside bomb exploded in central Somalia, killing six people. - *Dow Jones Newswires, April 7*

April 7, 2008 (YEMEN): Authorities arrested seven suspects in connection with the April 6 attack on a residential housing complex for Westerners in Sana`a. An official said that some of the suspects had links to al-Qa`ida. The Jund al-Yaman Brigades, which is believed connected to al-Qa`ida, took credit for the attack, stating that they fired three mortar shells at the compound as an act of revenge for last year's killing of Taliban military commander Mullah Dadullah. - *AP, April 7*

April 7, 2008 (NORTH AFRICA): Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb released a new statement in which it warned that it will not be responsible for the fate of the two Austrian tourists the group abducted in Tunisia in February. AQIM's deadline for its demands to be met passed on April 6. According to the statement, "Austria has shown disregard and carelessness regarding its citizens, despite the flexibility of the mujahidin in their legitimate demands. Now, after the new preconditions of the mujahidin, it [Austria] is responsible first and foremost

for the lives and the fate of the abducted.”  
– *AP, April 7*

April 7, 2008 (MAURITANIA): Security forces attacked a group of gunmen suspected of having links to al-Qa`ida and of being involved in the December 2007 killings of four French tourists in Mauritania. At least one of the men was killed by security forces, but the fate of the other militants is not clear. – *AP, April 8; Reuters, April 9*

April 7, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters killed two police officers after attacking their checkpoint in Shindand district of Herat Province. – *AP, April 8*

April 7, 2008 (THAILAND): Suspected insurgents destroyed four power relay lines and a cell phone transmitter in Narathiwat Province. A total of five bombs were used, and it is believed that wristwatches were the trigger mechanisms. – *The Nation, April 8*

April 8, 2008 (SOMALIA): A suicide car bomber rammed his vehicle into an African Union military position, killing one civilian. The target was a base housing primarily Burundian peacekeepers. The al-Shabab militant group claimed credit for the attack. – *AFP, April 8*

April 8, 2008 (LIBYA): Libya released from jail 90 members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. Authorities claim that all of those released had renounced violence. – *AP, April 9*

April 8, 2008 (THAILAND): The Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO) posted a statement on its website saying that the group is “fully committed to finding a peaceful resolution of the conflict” in southern Thailand. There are a number of other groups involved in the southern Thailand insurgency, and it is not clear whether they support PULO’s new statement. – *AP, April 9*

April 8, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban militants ambushed a group of road construction workers in Zabul Province, killing 18 of their guards. – *UPI, April 9*

April 8, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): According to a confidential police report provided to the Associated Press, a Filipino militant who was considered a prime candidate to lead the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) “declined the emirship.” The militant,

known as Yasser Igasan, was trained in the Middle East and was allegedly sought because of his connections with financiers in the Middle East. The police report further stated that the ASG “continues to operate without a central leadership.” – *AP, April 8*

April 8, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): Six people were kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf Group in Sulu Province. – *GMA News.TV, April 10*

April 9, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): Abu Sayyaf Group militants released six hostages after ransoms were reportedly paid by the victims’ families. The six were abducted from Sulu Province on April 8. – *AHN, April 10; GMA News.TV, April 10*

April 9, 2008 (PAKISTAN): U.S. counterterrorism officials told reporters that an al-Qa`ida bombmaker, Abu al-`Ubayda al-Masri, died in Pakistan several months ago due to natural causes, possibly from hepatitis. According to Fox News, “Al-Masri is credited with recruiting, training and directing the suicide bombers involved in the July 2005 London [bombings], and officials also believe he played a role in the liquid explosives bomb plot to blow up transatlantic flights bound for the U.S. and Canada in the summer of 2006.” – *Fox News, April 9*

April 9, 2008 (UNITED KINGDOM): A UK appeals court blocked the deportation of Jordanian al-Qa`ida-linked cleric Abu Qatada, along with two Libyans, because the suspects would possibly be tortured once out of British custody. – *The Guardian, April 10*

April 10, 2008 (UNITED STATES): Suspected al-Qa`ida conspirator Ibrahim Ahmad Mahmud al-Qusi, who is currently being held at Guantanamo Bay, told a U.S. military court that “Usama bin Ladin has succeeded in a great way in attacking you militarily and economically...The whole world has a headache from your [United States] hypocrisy.” The Sudanese al-Qusi is accused of being a bodyguard, a driver and logistics operative for Bin Ladin from 1996-2001. – *Reuters, April 10*

April 10, 2008 (MAURITANIA): Authorities arrested Maarouf Ould Hadib, who they allege was in charge of the al-Qa`ida-linked group that killed four French tourists in December 2007. The suspect was apprehended after police found him disguised as a woman in a taxi. – *AP, April 10*

April 10, 2008 (THAILAND): Thai Army Rangers killed two suspected members of the Runda Kumpulan Kecil insurgent group in Rueso district of Narathiwat Province. – *Bangkok Post, April 11*

April 10, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Security forces took control of the village Imam Dheri in the Swat Valley, which is a stronghold of pro-Taliban cleric Maulana Fazlullah. Authorities have now set up a checkpoint in the village. – *AP, April 10*

April 10, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide car bomber attempted to attack a NATO convoy in Kandahar, yet missed his target and instead killed eight civilians. – *AP, April 11; Los Angeles Times, April 11*

April 11, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): The Abu Sayyaf Group freed Jolo businesswoman Maria Rosalie Lao, who was abducted in January. According to the Sulu governor, the ASG released Lao in order to better evade Philippine Marines who were avidly pursuing the kidnapping group. Other reports, however, say that a negotiator, hired by Lao’s family, was responsible for the release. – *Philippine Daily Inquirer, April 11*

April 11, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Coalition forces killed 24 Taliban militants in airstrikes in Zabul Province. – *AP, April 12*

April 12, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban militants killed four policemen working to eradicate the opium harvest in Kandahar Province. – *Australian Broadcasting Corporation, April 14*

April 12, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber targeted a road construction crew in Nimroz Province, killing two Indian engineers and an Afghan driver. – *AP, April 12*

April 12, 2008 (TUNISIA): A court in Tunisia jailed 19 men for up to eight years for “having links with al-Qa`ida [in the Islamic Maghreb] and setting up a jihadist cell.” The men were arrested in late 2006. – *Reuters, April 13*

April 13, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): A mortar round placed under a car exploded in the parking lot of a Roman Catholic cathedral in Zamboanga City in the southern Philippines. Fifteen minutes after the explosion, another mortar detonated outside a bank in downtown Zamboanga.



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

Neither incident resulted in injuries. Authorities suspect that either the Abu Sayyaf Group or Jemaah Islamiyah was responsible for the attacks. - *AP, April 13*

April 14, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban militants killed 11 policemen at a checkpoint in Arghandab district of Kandahar Province. During the pre-dawn attack, a number of the men were killed in their sleep. - *AP, April 14; New York Times, April 15*

April 14, 2008 (SOMALIA): Militants threw a grenade into a movie theater in Marka, killing four people. There were no immediate claims of responsibility, but it is likely that Islamist militants conducted the attack. - *AFP, April 14*

April 14, 2008 (SOMALIA): Al-Shabab militants killed two Kenyan and two British teachers in the central Somali town of Beledweyne. The British teachers were dual British-Somali nationals. Al-Shabab spokesman Shaykh Muktar Robow claimed that "our fighters did not intentionally kill the teachers, but what we know is that their guards targeted fire at our forces and they returned fire, therefore maybe they were caught in the crossfire." - *AP, April 14*

April 15, 2008 (INDONESIA): Indonesian authorities announced that two Jemaah Islamiyah operatives who were arrested in Malaysia several weeks ago are now in their custody. Malaysian authorities discovered the men after a routine raid on illegal immigrants. The suspects were identified as Dr. Agus Purwanto and Abdur Rohim. According to CNN, "Terrorism expert Sidney Jones says Abdur Rohim is believed to have replaced Zarkasih as Jemaah Islamiyah leader, after Zarkasih's arrest last year." - *CNN, April 15*

April 15, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb killed two Afghan policemen in Kandahar Province's Spin Boldak district. - *Voice of America, April 15*

April 15, 2008 (IRAQ): A new audiotape by Abu `Umar al-Baghdadi, the head of the Islamic State of Iraq, appeared on Islamist internet forums, in which he called on Sunnis to unite against the "Crusader" enemy. "The scholars of the faith and the honorable shaykhs of the tribes are charged with calling and urging the children of the Sunni shaykhdoms to

leave the army and the police...and the Awakening Councils, on the basis that all arms...be directed at the Crusaders and those who support them," he said. - *AP, April 15*

April 15, 2008 (IRAQ): A car bomb detonated in Ba`quba, Diyala Province, killing at least 38 people. The bomb exploded outside a restaurant frequented by people visiting government offices. - *BBC News, April 15*

April 15, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber blew himself up in a restaurant in Ramadi, Anbar Province, killing at least 13 people. - *BBC News, April 15; AFP, April 15*

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