



COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER AT WEST POINT

# CTC SENTINEL

OBJECTIVE . RELEVANT . RIGOROUS

## Contents

### FEATURE ARTICLE

#### 1 Abu Yahya al-Libi's "Human Shields in Modern Jihad"

By Jarret Brachman and Abdullah Warius

### REPORTS

#### 4 The Funding Methods of FATA's Terrorists and Insurgents

By John Solomon

#### 7 Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi: A Counter-Terrorism Asset?

By Joas Wagemakers

#### 9 Human Smuggling and Trafficking: An International Terrorist Security Risk?

By Jacob Townsend and Hayder Mili

#### 12 Combating Terrorism with Non-Lethal Weapons

By John B. Alexander

#### 14 Evaluating the Terrorist Threat Posed by African-American Muslim Groups

By Christopher Heffelfinger

#### 17 Al-Qa`ida's Medinan Strategy: Targeting Global Energy Infrastructure

By Marisa Urgo and Jack F. Williams

#### 19 Iraq's Ho Chi Minh Trail: The Syrian-Iraqi Border Since 2003

By James Denselow

#### 21 Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

#### 25 CTC Sentinel Staff & Contacts

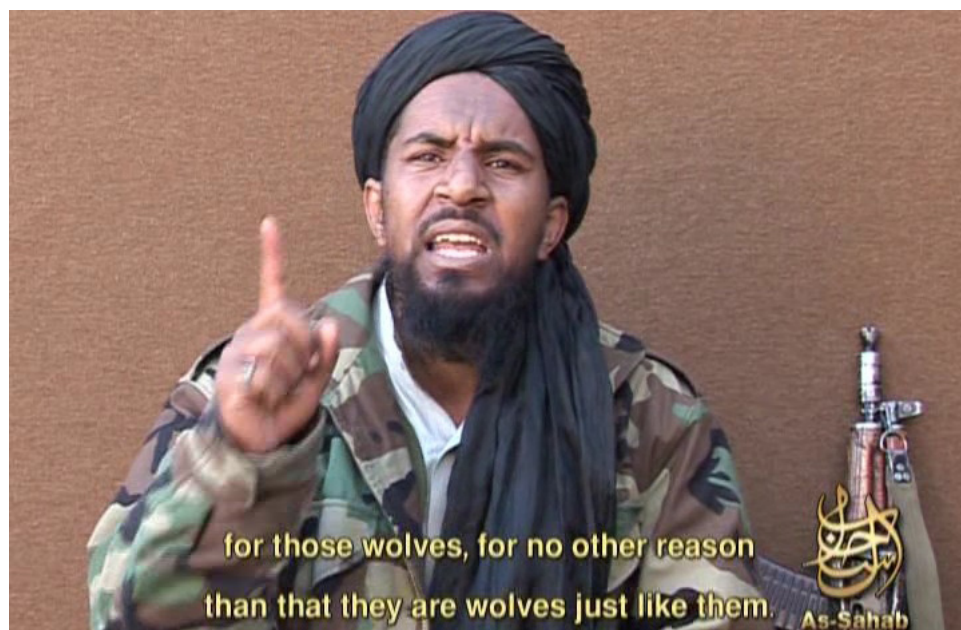
## About the CTC Sentinel

The Combating Terrorism Center is an independent educational and research institution based in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy, West Point. The CTC Sentinel harnesses the Center's global network of scholars and practitioners 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.

## Abu Yahya al-Libi's "Human Shields in Modern Jihad"

By Jarret Brachman and Abdullah Warius



IN THE COURSE of defending al-Qa`ida against charges of unjustly killing innocent Muslims during his April 2, 2008 "open interview," Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri reintroduced *Hukm al-Tatarrus* (the law on using human shields) into the debate.<sup>1</sup> A relatively unfamiliar term to non-Muslims and Muslims alike, *al-Tatarrus* refers to God's sanctioning of Muslim armies that are forced to kill other Muslims who are being used as human shields by an enemy during a time of war.<sup>2</sup> *Al-Tatarrus* is a religiously legitimate, albeit obscure, Islamic concept that al-Qa`ida ideologues have been increasingly using in order to exculpate themselves from charges of

apostasy. The method in which al-Qa`ida is promoting *al-Tatarrus*, however, seeks to facilitate the sacrifice of Muslim lives in contravention of 14 centuries of religious teachings. For instance, both al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula<sup>3</sup> and the al-Qa`ida Organization in Yemen<sup>4</sup> hid behind the protections offered by *al-Tatarrus* in their justification of terrorist attacks that

3 Al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) relied on the *al-Tatarrus* concept when pushed by the Arab press about why they killed so many women and children in the course of their attacks. For instance, in reaction to the al-Muhayya bombings in Riyadh, an AQAP official, Muhammad al-Ablaj, told *Majallat al-Majalla* (November 2003) that anyone who gathers in places frequented by non-Muslim enemies or who fails to flee those places is subject to the law of human shields, which protects one from God's wrath if they are unable to distinguish between killing Muslims and non-Muslims in the course of a combat operation on a legitimate target.

4 On November 7, 2007, the al-Qa`ida Organization in Yemen released the wills of the suicide attackers who conducted four coordinated attacks against oil installations in Hadramawt, Yemen in September 2006.

1 Ayman al-Zawahiri, "Open Interview with Shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri," published jointly by al-Sahab Media Production Organization and al-Fajr Center for Media, April 2, 2008, part one.

2 In its most comprehensive formulation, *al-Tatarrus* also sanctions the intentional killing of non-Muslim women and children when they are being used as shields, an issue that Abu Yahya mentions briefly.

resulted in significant Muslim casualties. Al-Qa`ida's use of *al-Tatarrus* was also at the heart of Sayyid Imam Sharif's recent attacks against al-Zawahiri and al-Qa`ida.<sup>5</sup>

Although an extensive body of Islamic literature exists on the topic, al-Zawahiri cited only three sources of intellectual authority regarding *al-Tatarrus*: his own books, a brief statement on the topic by

## **“Abu Yahya’s small essay on al-Tatarrus is nothing short of a religious revolution.”**

Usama bin Ladin and a short monograph penned by Abu Yahya al-Libi explicitly on *al-Tatarrus*.<sup>6</sup> Al-Zawahiri's reference to Abu Yahya al-Libi, the crown prince of al-Qa`ida, can be viewed as a savvy political move, one that allays jihadist fears of an Egyptian-Libyan rift within the “high command,” while simultaneously bolstering Abu Yahya's status within the movement. One could also view the reference as al-Zawahiri's attempt to refocus the global jihadist movement's attention on Abu Yahya's two-year-old work, *Human Shields in Modern Jihad*, because it offers something that al-Zawahiri believes important.<sup>7</sup>

### **Revolution in 36 Pages**

At first glance, Abu Yahya's 36-page monograph seems to be little more than a dry analysis of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) on the matter of killing non-combatants. He correctly defines *al-Tatarrus* as the exemption to the Islamic prohibition against shedding innocent Muslim blood

when a Muslim army is forced to kill other Muslims who are being used as shields by non-Muslim enemies. The non-Muslim enemy, Abu Yahya accurately explains, puts their Muslim captives

in places that make it impossible for the Muslim army to reach them and hit them without killing or injuring the prisoners. This serves as an obstacle in front of the Muslim army to stop them from attempting an attack and as a deterrent to attacking and striking.

Abu Yahya even celebrates the fact that previous Islamic scholars have dealt with the topic and conditions of *al-Tatarrus*, calling their work “a gift from God.”

When one pushes past Abu Yahya's spellbinding prose and sycophantic praise of Islamic tradition, however, the enormity of his real ambition becomes shockingly clear: Abu Yahya's small essay on *al-Tatarrus* is nothing short of a religious revolution.

Early Islamic thinkers typically used three general forms of shielding in the course of their discussions on the matter: first, the intentional placement of Muslims in an enemy fort or outpost that a Muslim army wants to conquer as either residents or prisoners; second, the placement of Muslims onboard an enemy ship that a Muslim army wants to sink; or third, when an enemy force literally takes cover behind Muslims in a combat situation.

Abu Yahya begins his theological upheaval by explaining that these early thinkers were not specific enough in their discussions on the use of human shields nor did they adequately articulate the conditions under which it is permissible to shed Muslim blood in the course of warfare against a non-Muslim enemy when they take Muslims as human shields. This perceived historical failure of the early scholars to deal with *al-Tatarrus* honestly and comprehensively, whether due to their fear or embarrassment, he says, has led to a condition wherein the unjustified spilling of Muslim blood has become pervasive.<sup>8</sup>

8 Although Abu Yahya does not explicitly make this point, early Islamic writings on the topic of *al-Tatarrus* are quite inaccessible to the average Muslim reader given their specialized vocabulary and dense style. Abu Yahya's approach to the concept is notably different from

As if criticizing 14 centuries of Islamic thought on the matter was not enough, Abu Yahya decides to reject the premise, saying, “I have never seen [*al-Tatarrus* as an explicit concept] mentioned in hadiths of the Prophet or in the biographies of the fighting companions in this same particular way that scholars have expressed it.” By calling the conditions placed on *al-Tatarrus* by Islamic scholars something “new” (and thus an “innovation”), he grants himself the religious authority to not only reject the entire body of Islamic literature (and accompanying restrictions) on the killing of innocent Muslims, but he positions himself as the sole arbiter of what constitutes “permissibility” with regard to killing.

### **The Impact of Modern Warfare**

After dismissing an entire tradition of Islamic scholarship out-of-hand, Abu Yahya takes on his next major challenger: the Qur'an and hadith. Instead of defending himself against the most damning Qur'anic and hadith passages regarding the prohibitions against killing innocent Muslims as one might expect, Abu Yahya flaunts his intellectual flexibility in a curious two-step. First, he embraces those passages, becoming their strongest proponent: “There are numerous hadiths to this effect; they are strict about the sacredness of Muslim blood, and they warn ardently against breaching it and not respecting it,” he ironically reminds the reader. Yet it becomes quickly apparent that his agreement with those verses is entirely disingenuous.

While the Qur'anic and hadith restrictions on killing innocent Muslims were appropriate during the early days of Islam, he suggests, they should have no bearing on warfare today because modern warfare is qualitatively different. Whereas early Islamic thinkers had to consider the implications of using a catapult against an enemy fortress in which Muslims were residing, or conducting night raids against an enemy household in which Muslims were likely present, the nature of contemporary warfare is one where the enemy uses “raids, clashes and ambushes, and they hardly ever stop chasing the mujahidin everywhere

traditional Islamic discussions in that it simplifies matters considerably.

5 Sayyid Imam Sharif criticizes the jihadist movement for too loosely employing the *al-Tatarrus* justification as a way of helping them to expand their circle of killing. Sayyid Imam Sharif, “First Part: Rationalizing Jihad in Egypt, the World,” *al-Masri al-Yawm*, November 18, 2007. Also see Jarret Brachman, “Leading Egyptian Jihadist Sayyid Imam Renounces Violence,” *CTC Sentinel* 1:1 (2008).

6 Specifically, the books Ayman al-Zawahiri referenced of his own include *The Healing of the Believers' Chests* and *The Exoneration*.

7 Although the essay is dated January 6, 2006, it was not published and widely circulated until April 16, 2006, when it appeared on the Tajdeed and Ana al-Muslim websites.

and all the time, imprisoning them, their families and their supporters.” What it means to be “directly engaged in combat,” Abu Yahya argues, has changed. By positing that Islam is in a state of constant and universal warfare, he implicitly lowers the threshold for proving that one’s killing of innocent Muslims is just.

In short, the nature of today’s all-encompassing warfare means that the jihadist movement must find a “new perception of different ways of modern shielding which were probably not provided for by the scholars of Islam who knew only of the weapons used during their era.” In these few sentences, Abu Yahya attempts to wipe the slate clean of the most sacred and defining texts with regard to the issue of killing human shields.

The only options that Muslims have left, he explains, particularly given the ways in which non-Muslim enemies occupy Islamic countries, take large numbers of Muslims prisoner, and fight using modern weaponry are the following:

1. “Stop fighting the enemy out of fear for the lives of the human shield,” which is clearly not an actual option for Abu Yahya or al-Qa`ida;
2. “accept the idea of sacrificing the shield and engage in a fierce war using weapons of mass destruction”;
3. “or choose to engage in a long-term war against the enemy using traditional weapons,” which Abu Yahya suggests is “not advantageous because it prevents one from benefiting from the use of weapons of mass destruction because of caring for the lives of the enemy’s prisoners who would be the first victims...if they were used.”

The only viable and effective option for Abu Yahya al-Libi is the second: accepting the fact that the nature of modern warfare makes the killing of large amounts of Muslims a necessity.

#### Abu Yahya’s Mistakes

Abu Yahya’s revolutionary pamphlet follows suit with previous treatments on the matter by al-Qa`ida ideologues who have similarly sought to justify their killing of innocent Muslims using *al-Tatarrus* rather than objectively clarifying the conditions when its use is permissible or impermissible. In fact, Abu Yahya uses derivatives of the word “permissible”

more than 20 times in his short essay and has virtually no discussion of the conditions under which the killing of innocent Muslims is impermissible.

He also employs another trick commonly used by al-Qa`ida thinkers, which is heralding the death of those non-combatant Muslims who have been killed in terrorist attacks by calling them martyrs. Quoting the words of Ibn Taymiyya, Abu Yahya writes, “The one which allows/accepts that their death is for the sake of jihad and is analogous with the death of Muslims when fighting [for Islam], in which case they are martyrs.”

Abu Yahya’s essay contains several major oversights that one can only believe are intentional given the depth of his knowledge on the issue. The

### “Abu Yahya attempts to wipe the slate clean of the most sacred and defining texts with regard to the issue of killing human shields.”

first oversight is regarding the fact that *al-Tatarrus* is not limited to the human body, but is commonly extended to the enemy’s use of Muslim property, including buildings, infrastructure and vehicles as a deterrent in times of war. Abu Yahya’s decision to leave out Muslim property becomes clearer when viewed in the light of his second major oversight: compensation for damage caused.

Most discussions of *al-Tatarrus* during the past 14 centuries include reference to the necessary compensation required by God for damage caused to Muslim lives, property or wealth. The most blatant evidence of Abu Yahya’s intentional avoidance of compensatory damages appears in the peculiar way that he cites the Qur’an, noting: “Never should a believer kill a believer but (if it so happens) by mistake.” Had Abu Yahya continued his quote to the next verse of the sura, he would have been forced to reveal it as,

Never should a believer kill a believer but if it so happens by mistake, compensation is due: If

one so kills a believer, it is ordained that he should free a believing slave, and pay compensation to the deceased’s family, unless they remit it freely. If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you, and he was a believer, the freeing of a believing slave (is enough). If he belonged to a people with whom ye have treaty of Mutual alliance, compensation should be paid to his family, and a believing slave be freed. For those who find this beyond their means, is prescribe a fast for two months running: by way of repentance to Allah: for Allah hath all knowledge and all wisdom.<sup>9</sup>

As the above verse suggests, there are two general forms of compensation that are relevant to the *al-Tatarrus* discussion. The first is *kaffara*, defined as the atonement to God or repayment made for some failure to act, or harm done to another. It usually mandates that the one who spilled Muslims’ blood either fast for a period of time (usually one or two months) or serve charitable acts (such as serving 60 poor Muslims food for a period of time). The second form of compensation is *diyya* (blood money), which is a monetary compensation paid as a fine to the next of kin of someone who was killed intentionally.

There is little doubt that Abu Yahya intentionally avoided discussing the religious duty to compensate the family of Muslim victims who are killed.<sup>10</sup> This is most likely due to the fact that doing so is simply beyond al-Qa`ida’s current capacity and would likely catalyze an even stronger popular backlash against the organization within Muslim populations who have been targeted. If Abu Yahya were to have tried to extend *al-Tatarrus* to Muslim property and riches, he would have further indebted al-Qa`ida to Islam for the great deal of property damage that their attacks have caused.

<sup>9</sup> Qur’an 4:92.

<sup>10</sup> Abu Yahya fails to deal with the lessons learned in the well-known story of the inadvertent killing of Yaman, father of Hudayfa, during the battle of Uhud, as referenced in *Fethoof al-Baldan* (1/304) by al-Belathri. During this battle, when the Prophet and his companions were in retreat, one of the Prophet’s companions, Abdullah ibn Mas’ud, mistook Yaman for an enemy and killed him. In response, the Prophet obliged Mas’ud to pay the *diyya* to Hudayfa, which he then donated to charity.



Another important dimension of *al-Tatarrus* overlooked by Abu Yahya is the duty that is incumbent upon Muslim fighters who are hiding from an attacking enemy in civilian Muslim populations to compensate the local population for any damage inflicted by the enemy to that area (to include the loss of Muslim lives, property or wealth).

#### Conclusion

In sum, Abu Yahya al-Libi uses *al-Tatarrus* to dismiss 14 centuries of Islamic scholarship, advocate the religious permissibility of killing innocent Muslims and artificially bifurcate Islam into two halves: those who are “ignorant or obstinate” about the harm posed to Islam by its enemies, and those who are dedicated to not just “resisting” this threat but “removing” that harm. One must be “blind,” he argues, if they disagree with him or refuse to sacrifice Muslim lives for the sake of his war.

*Dr. Jarret Brachman is the Combating Terrorism Center's Director of Research where he manages projects related to al-Qa`ida strategy and ideology. Dr. Brachman has testified before the U.S. Congress, spoken before the British House of Lords and routinely advises government officials on counter-terrorism strategy. His work has been profiled on 60 Minutes, CNN, al-Jazira and Sharq al-Awsat. He served as a Fellow with the Central Intelligence Agency's Counter-Terrorist Center before coming to West Point. His new book, Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice, is forthcoming with Routledge Press this summer.*

*Abdullah Warius is an Arabic linguist with the Combating Terrorism Center.*

## The Funding Methods of FATA's Terrorists and Insurgents

By John Solomon

THERE IS BROAD consensus in the United States and Europe that Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) provide sanctuary to local and foreign Taliban, al-Qa`ida's central leadership, and the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU).<sup>1</sup> During the past two years, there have been at least four advanced attack cells with links to Pakistan's tribal areas disrupted in the United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark and Spain. Sanctuaries enable insurgents and terrorists to not only plan attacks, but also to generate critical support infrastructures by raising funds, projecting ideology and providing technical assistance to associated groups and cells. To effectively destroy al-Qa`ida and its support structures, U.S. national security policy correctly calls for the closure of these terrorist sanctuaries in concert with a coordinated global effort to desiccate the movement's funding streams.

This is no small challenge. At no time has al-Qa`ida enjoyed a more formidable redoubt than in FATA.<sup>2</sup> Known in Pakistan as *ilaga-e-ghair* (lawless lands), the Pashtun tribal areas that revolve around the Peshawar Valley have, with some exception during the Mughal and Durrani empires, always remained autonomous. In Waziristan, there is no empire of any record that has succeeded in subjugating the region's tribes. Waziristan is a stronghold of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) movement that Baitullah Mehsud commands, and a suspected safe haven for core elements of al-Qa`ida and the IJU.<sup>3</sup>

Despite its advantages, however, FATA has at least one significant disadvantage for the militants there: financial vulnerability. Al-Qa`ida and the IJU, and their guardians the TTP and Afghan Taliban, need stable sources of revenue to maintain their heightened scale of militancy in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Western Europe. Underscoring the relation between funding and capability, the TTP *amir* in Bannu District of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP),

**“At no time has al-Qa`ida enjoyed a more formidable redoubt than in FATA.”**

Issa Khan, has reportedly said recently that the only reason it does not carry out attacks globally against the United States and Europe is because it lacks the resources to do so.<sup>4</sup> Recognizing that countering the financing of terrorism is an effective way to degrade the ability of al-Qa`ida and its associated groups, this report examines the known or suspected funding methods of the main jihadist organizations active in FATA.

#### Funding Methods

To appreciate the current funding structures of FATA militants, one must examine those from which they have evolved. The ethnic Pashtun TTP and Afghan Taliban indeed share a common history, language, ethnicity, religion, culture and in many cases familial descent. The two groups also share material interests in common. They are intimately familiar with taxing the lucrative licit and illicit transit corridor that extends from Karachi through FATA or Balochistan to landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asia. The Taliban established its rule in the early and mid-1990s precisely because it had marginalized the warlords and positioned itself as the security provider for all those with an economic interest in the lucrative Afghanistan-Pakistan transit trade corridor of smuggled goods.<sup>5</sup> Previously, a Hobbesian state of nature had developed from the war economy of the 1980s, and

1 “Combating Terrorism: The US Lacks Comprehensive Plan to Destroy the Terrorist Threat and Close the Safe Haven in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas,” U.S. Government Accountability Office, April 2008; “EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report,” Europol, 2008.

2 For a good background, see Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, “No Sign Until the Burst of Fire: Understanding the Pakistan-Afghanistan Frontier,” *International Security* 32:4 (2008).

3 For more on TTP, see Hassan Abbas, “A Profile of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan,” *CTC Sentinel* 1:2 (2008).

4 Interview, Tehrik-i-Taliban lieutenant, conducted by Saifullah Mehsud, FATA, April 2008.

5 Barnett R. Rubin, “The Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan,” *World Development* 28:10 (2000).

reached a crescendo at the time of the Soviet withdrawal, which resulted in a security vacuum filled by a dizzying array of predatory warlords and brigands. Insecurity along key trade routes was endemic and transit traders and truckers were left paying exorbitant tolls or simply having their goods stolen, which had negative residual effects for stakeholders throughout the supply chain.

By becoming a “one-stop” security provider, the predominantly Pashtun merchants and truckers who required secure transit from the trade corridor extending from Dubai through Balochistan or FATA became the Taliban’s financial backing through taxes, contributions and political support.<sup>6</sup> According to one World Bank report, the estimated Taliban revenue sourced from taxing Afghanistan-Pakistan trade in 1997 was \$75 million.<sup>7</sup> The same report indicated that taxed opium and “contributions” from truckers during the same year may have accounted for as much as twice that amount. The Taliban also controls vast swathes of the three highest opium producing provinces in Afghanistan, the source of 93% of world supply. The security taxed revenue from that trade is estimated to have increased to as much as 20% of \$2.2 billion.<sup>8</sup>

FATA’s tribal militias and now the TTP umbrella alliance have also raised funds from a security tax levied on the goods Pashtun merchants transport through the tax-free area. The 1965 Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA) created a region-wide arbitrating center where profits could be made off policy-induced price differentials from tax-free Dubai through the tax-free FATA in Pakistan or beyond. The result, according to all first hand and scholarly accounts, is “a smugglers paradise.” In addition, it has remained a perennial livelihood for many of the non-settled tribes in FATA to tax or loot goods transiting through their areas of control through the use or threat of violence. The pervasive opium industry feeds into the smuggled goods trade transiting FATA and has benefited mainly

organized crime and TTP elements. On the processing and distribution sides of the business, TTP is thought to tax laboratories up to 15% and distributors a flat tax of 15%.<sup>9</sup> Since the TTP has grown more powerful and established control of markets in FATA and the NWFP, there have been some recent signs suggesting that traditional tribal structures are battling with militants over funding

### **“The Taliban also controls vast swathes of the three highest opium producing provinces in Afghanistan, the source of 93% of world supply.”**

sources. The clashes between the Afridi-Kokikhel and Lashkar Islam in April 2008 appear to be the most transparent case of a tribal interest group defending a traditional source of revenue sought by an insurgent group.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from looting and taxing in FATA and the NWFP, TTP has deployed dual use terror-crime cells further afield in Karachi. TTP has recruited security professionals, trained them in terrorist tactics in Waziristan, and then deployed them as hit squads and bank robbers. Baitullah Mehsud and TTP allegedly provided a jihadist organized crime network called Jundullah with a hit list, money, weapons and a means of transferring stolen money via an Egyptian TTP money courier, named Hamza Jofi, to its safe haven in South Waziristan.<sup>11</sup> The Egyptian nationality suggests a possible al-Qa`ida link. To give some indication of the scale of a robbery, a recently arrested Jundullah cell’s final bank heist amounted to about \$73,500. One of these arrested cadre disclosed during interrogation that there were about 600 Jundullah active and ready suicide cadre in Karachi.<sup>12</sup> TTP

has also trained those without security backgrounds and then deployed them to cities to find security jobs in banks in order to rob them.<sup>13</sup> Seeking external sources of revenue outside FATA may be a way to avoid disturbing traditional income streams had by tribal interests.

Another piece of the Taliban’s partnership with the Pashtun merchant class is the suspicion that it entrusted a select class of them to act as trustees and managers of Taliban assets present at the time of the U.S. invasion in October 2001.<sup>14</sup> After the 1998 U.S. Embassy attacks in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, the UN imposed financial sanctions on the Taliban and al-Qa`ida through UNSCR 1267. The sanctions sensitized the Taliban so that it likely anticipated the financial sanctions that would follow the 9/11 attacks. Therefore, the Taliban leadership probably transferred their cash assets at the time of invasion to capable businessmen who they could trust.<sup>15</sup> A rare and relevant example regarding the destination of some of these funds emerged in January 2006 when Hamid Karzai’s government issued an Interpol Red Notice for a prominent Kandahari Pashtun businessman, Abdul Bari, who was accused of managing Taliban funds for Mullah Omar in Pakistan.<sup>16</sup> Individuals like Abdul Bari—successful Pashtun traders with Taliban connections, international businesses and companies dealing in commodities susceptible to trade-based laundering such as used cars and trucks, vehicle parts, and electronics operating in less regulated jurisdictions along the ATTA corridor including Dubai—would fit the profile of businessmen with whom the Taliban would likely entrust its assets.<sup>17</sup> Due to corruption and the lack of documents and business transparency in Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Gulf, however, the money trail often does not exist or the authority bringing the charges is

ers Present in Karachi,” *Daily Times*, February 4, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Craig S. Smith, “The Business World; For Afghans, the Bank is Often a Bag of Cash,” *New York Times*, March 10, 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Sohail Abdul Nasir, “Two Taliban-linked Companies Raided by Pakistani Authorities,” *Terrorism Focus* 3:6 (2006).

<sup>17</sup> Syed Saleem Shehzad, “How the Taliban Keep Their Coffers Full,” *Asia Times Online*, January 10, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Cyrus Hodes and Mark Sedra, “Chapter Two: Spoiler Groups and the Anti-Government Insurgency,” *Adelphi Papers* 47:391 (2007).

<sup>7</sup> Zareen Naqvi, *Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade Relations* (Islamabad: World Bank, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> Barnett R. Rubin, “Saving Afghanistan,” *Foreign Affairs* 86:1 (2007).

<sup>9</sup> Cyrus Hodes and Mark Sedra, “Chapter Three: The Opium Trade,” *Adelphi Papers* 47:391 (2007).

<sup>10</sup> Sher Khan Afridi, “8 Khasadars Abducted,” *The Nation*, April 17, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Jamal Khurshid, “Jundullah Man Admits Sending Looted Money to Wana: Police,” *The News*, February 26, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Faraz Khan, “Jundullah Claims 600 Suicide Bomb-

convinced to drop them.

Contributions and donations among Pashtun businessman and ordinary people in Pakistan and FATA constitute another dimension of the funding structure. The same Pashtun merchant class is often targeted for contributions—financial gifts over and above the amounts mandated by the religious taxes, *ushr* and *zakat*. Usually a sympathetic mullah will use his contact base to assemble a relatively affluent audience. Then, either he or a prominent Taliban commander will address the audience and ask for financial contributions. According to anecdotal information, some high net worth Pashtun traders donate as much as \$100,000 during these gatherings.<sup>18</sup> Money is also raised among middle and lower-middle class Pakistanis under the guise of *zakat* in *madrasas* and mosques sympathetic to the movement. The Taliban and TTP are able to raise substantial sums this way, especially in areas controlled by TTP mullahs with seminaries.<sup>19</sup>

More important perhaps are the sophisticated videos and telecommunications used by militants to target fundraising markets abroad. The Taliban and al-Qa`ida are both active fundraisers among the Gulf Arab populations in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia; almost all of their messaging is in Arabic. The IJU targets potential support markets among ethnolinguistic Turk populations in Europe (mainly Germany) and Turkey, where euros and the new lira hold relatively high exchange values. The more interesting facet, perhaps, is the informal trust verification process and the methods used to move the money once raised. There is anecdotal and other reporting information available suggesting that individuals are specifically tasked with distributing messages and collecting or moving funds. One example emerged after Saudi internal security allegedly detected and disrupted an al-Qa`ida financial support network that entered the country during the hajj

pilgrimage season in December 2007. The model described by the Saudi government and other reporting follows. A mobile phone SIM card contained a message from an al-Qa`ida fundraising appeal from Ayman al-Zawahiri. The message was physically transferred by a non-Saudi to a Saudi national in-country. Al-Zawahiri endorsed the Saudi funds collector in his recorded message as “a trusted brother in whom we have confidence.” The funds collector used the cover of charity work to approach possible donors.<sup>20</sup> Funds successfully raised are then suspected to be moved formally or informally—by *hawala* or cash courier—most probably to complicit money exchangers in Peshawar before being moved to aid FATA militants. There have been a number of arrests of Saudi al-Qa`ida members in Pakistan caught carrying substantial sums of foreign currencies while in transit between countries. To further support this claim, there is also a significant amount of Saudi currency evident in TTP strongholds, especially in Swat in the NWFP.

Taliban fundraising appeals note its financial infrastructure. According to the 21st issue of the Taliban’s Arabic monthly magazine *al-Sumud*, its financial authority is administered through a *shura* comprised of a head with deputies in every Afghan province.<sup>21</sup> Budgets are apparently estimated by province, and donations collected domestically and abroad are allocated according to need. Described by some analysts as a “mini-copy of the Taliban,” the Pakistani TTP leadership tends to imitate the administrative methods of the Afghan Taliban leadership, which is comparatively older and more experienced. It is suspected that a similar finance *shura* exists in FATA and in the NWFP.

The IJU has emerged as a particularly worrisome threat in the West due to its recruitment and fundraising among ethnic Turks and converts in Germany and Turkey. IJU trainees reached advanced stages in a planning cycle to attack U.S. military facilities in Germany in 2007, after they received explosives training in Pakistan. IJU has also been linked to another plot to

bomb the subway systems of a number of Western European cities. Turkic Germans recruited by the IJU have also begun to appear with greater frequency in battles and/or suicide attacks in the Afghan theater, according to some reports. To raise funds, IJU seems to rely to a large extent on donations raised via the internet in Turkey and among the ethnic Turk demographic residing in Germany and perhaps other parts of Europe. The comparatively advantageous foreign exchange of euros or lira to rupees and afghanis could make these members financially beneficial for the group. Perhaps correspondingly, Uzbek numbers in North Waziristan seem to be increasing. According to one local source, the number of jihadist Uzbeks (IMU and IJU combined) has increased from approximately 600 into the thousands.<sup>22</sup>

### Conclusion

“Jihadi armies march on their stomachs,” as one seasoned diplomat with deep experience in the region put it, “and it’s not as easy as it used to be for them to beg food.” While the Taliban movements, al-Qa`ida and the Islamic Jihad Union exploit a wide range of financial flows, through under-regulated jurisdictions and industries, constant pressure must continue to be applied through all levers of power available to the United States and its European allies to constrain the jihadist elements in FATA. The likelihood of a military or political solution is highly unlikely in the near- or medium-term; therefore, more direct pressure must be applied on the enemy’s known and suspected funding streams to increasingly degrade its ability to attack.

*John Solomon is global head of terrorism research for World-Check. An expert on terrorist financing with extensive regional experience in the Middle East and Asia, he is regularly invited to speak to governments and leading financial institutions around the world. His work on terrorism issues has appeared in the edited volume Unmasking Terror: A Global Review of Terrorist Activities, in addition to Jane’s Intelligence Review and The Jamestown Foundation’s Terrorism Monitor and Terrorism Focus. He holds a master’s degree in Middle East and Central Asian Security Studies from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland and is proficient in Arabic.*

18 Personal interview, Syed Saleem Shehzad, May 7, 2008.

19 For example, Maulana Sadiq Noor, a member of the Dawar tribe and an important Taliban leader close to al-Qa`ida, reputedly raises substantial sums through the Manba-ul-Uloom *madrasa* that he runs in Miran Shah, North Waziristan.

20 “Interior Ministry Warns Al-Qaeda Financiers,” *Arab News*, March 9, 2008.

21 “21<sup>st</sup> edition of Taliban Monthly Magazine,” *al-Sumud*, March 2008.

22 Interview, Sailab Mehsud, conducted by Saifullah Mehsud, FATA, April 2008.



## Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi: A Counter-Terrorism Asset?

By Joas Wagemakers

ON MARCH 12, 2008, Jordanian authorities released from prison the radical Islamic ideologue Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi. He had spent approximately three years in prison on the charge that he had contacted and encouraged terrorists. Al-Maqdisi had repeatedly denied these accusations, however, and had started a hunger strike to protest his prolonged detention.<sup>1</sup> The lack of evidence against him as well as his declining health due to the hunger strike are probably the reasons behind his release.<sup>2</sup>

Although al-Maqdisi's release was not broadcast widely by Western media, it is important to take a closer examination. The mostly Arabic media that did report on his release were unanimous in labeling al-Maqdisi an important thinker within the world of radical Islamic ideology, with one newspaper even calling him "the spiritual father of the al-Qa'ida movement."<sup>3</sup> Even though this particular claim may be an exaggeration, there is no doubt that al-Maqdisi is one of the most prominent radical Islamic ideologues in the world today. His writings are said to have been a source of influence to terrorists in Saudi Arabia<sup>4</sup> and Jordan,<sup>5</sup> his website ([www.tawhed.ws](http://www.tawhed.ws)) is perhaps the most comprehensive library of jihadist

literature on the internet and a report by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point calls him "the key contemporary ideologue in the Jihadi intellectual universe."<sup>6</sup> Considering al-Maqdisi's stature and influence among jihadists, it is not surprising that the news of his release caused expressions of great joy on several radical Islamist weblogs.<sup>7</sup>

Al-Maqdisi's influence on other radicals is not, however, what made him well-known among journalists and scholars alike. The credit for that goes to Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian terrorist who became infamous for his bombing attacks against Shi'a in Iraq and who was killed by U.S. forces in 2006. The two men spent several years in a Jordanian prison together, with al-Maqdisi acting as al-Zarqawi's mentor. When both were released in 1999, al-Zarqawi went to Afghanistan and later Iraq, while al-Maqdisi stayed in Jordan, being re-arrested several times. In July 2005, when al-Maqdisi had just been released a few days before, he used an interview with al-Jazeera to criticize his former pupil for his extreme use of violence and his tendency to target other Muslims.<sup>8</sup> Some have argued that this type of criticism, particularly coming from an important ideologue like al-Maqdisi, could actually help moderate the views of Muslim youth willing to engage in terrorism.<sup>9</sup> It has even been suggested that al-Maqdisi's criticism of al-Zarqawi is part of a series of moderate "revisions" (*muraja'at*) of his

radical ideology,<sup>10</sup> perhaps implying that al-Maqdisi might, in the future, even be used by the Jordanian authorities to discourage others from engaging in terrorism. This article concentrates on al-Maqdisi's views on the use of violence, whether he has indeed become more moderate and what implications this has for any efforts to use him as a counter-terrorism asset.

### The Near Enemy

Although al-Maqdisi, who was born in 1959 and whose real name is 'Isam al-Barqawi, is originally from Barqa, a village in the West Bank, he was raised ideologically in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. In the latter two countries he immersed himself in the ideas of Wahhabism, and in the 1980s became involved with the supporters of Juhayman al-'Utaybi, who had occupied the Grand Mosque of Mecca for two weeks in 1979.<sup>11</sup> In this period, he started working on his first book, *Millat Ibrahim*,<sup>12</sup> which he finished in 1984. The book stresses the need for Muslims to employ the concept of *al-wala' wa'l-bara'* (loyalty and disavowal) in their lives, which in al-Maqdisi's view means that Muslims should be loyal and faithful to God in every possible way, while disavowing all forms of polytheism (*shirk*) and its adherents.<sup>13</sup> For al-Maqdisi, polytheism is not just the worship of multiple gods, but also the adherence to non-Islamic laws and obedience to the leaders of Muslim countries, whom he considers infidels (*kuffar*) for not fully applying Islamic law (*Shari'a*). Since al-Maqdisi views all these as manifestations of unbelief (*kufr*), any positive feelings toward them by Muslims should be seen as misdirected loyalty to others besides God. Since he states that God should be the only rightful recipient of Muslims' loyalty, al-Maqdisi believes that adherence to man-made laws or obedience to worldly rulers effectively amounts to worshipping other gods.

1 For more detailed accounts of the exact accusations against al-Maqdisi, see Human Rights Watch, "Arbitrary Arrest and Detention of 'Isam al-'Utaibi (Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi)," December 4, 2007; Human Rights Watch, "Human Rights Watch Letter to Jordanian Prime Minister Dahabi on Detention of 'Isam al-'Utaibi (Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi)," December 4, 2007.

2 *Al-'Arab al-Yawm*, March 13, 2008; *al-Hayat*, March 13, 2008; *Middle East Times*, March 18, 2008; *al-Sabil*, March 18, 2008; *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, March 13, 2008.

3 *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, March 13, 2008.

4 Mamoun Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent* (New York: Palgrave, 1999), pp. 2-4; Madawi al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State - Islamic Voices from a New Generation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 122.

5 International Crisis Group, "Jordan's 9/11: Dealing with Jihadi Islamism," November 23, 2005, pp. 9-10; Quintan Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism - Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, and State Power in Jordan* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), p. 122.

6 William McCants and Jarret Brachman, *Militant Ideology Atlas - Executive Report* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2006), p. 8.

7 For an example of one such posting, see <http://revolution.muslimpad.com/2008/03/12/allahuakbar-shaykh-abu-muhammad-al-maqdisi-is-released/>.

8 For the interview, see al-Jazeera, July 6, 2005. For more on al-Maqdisi's criticism of al-Zarqawi and a detailed description of the relationship between the two men, see for example Steven Brooke, "The Preacher and the Jihadi," in Hillel Fradkin, Husain Haqqani and Eric Brown eds., *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 3 (2006): pp. 52-66; Fu'ad Husayn, *Al-Zarqawi - Al-Jil al-Thani li-l-Qa'ida* (Beirut: Dar al-Khayyal, 2005), pp. 11-15, pp. 101-114; Nibras Kazimi, "A Virulent Ideology in Mutation: Zarqawi Upstages Maqdisi," in Fradkin, Haqqani and Brown eds., *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 2 (2005): pp. 59-73; Loretta Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq - Al-Zarqawi and the New Generation* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005), pp. 50-77.

9 *Al-Hayat*, March 13, 2008; Personal interview, member of the Saudi opposition, March 11, 2008.

10 *Al-Hayat*, March 13, 2008.

11 Thomas Hegghammer and Stéphane Lacroix, "Rejectionist Islamism in Saudi Arabia: The Story of Juhayman al-'Utaybi Revisited," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39:1 (2007): pp. 115-116.

12 This book, as well as all other writings by al-Maqdisi used for this article, was taken from [www.tawhed.ws](http://www.tawhed.ws). Since most of these sources can only be found in html format, referring to page numbers is difficult.

13 Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, *Millat Ibrahim wa-Da'wat al-Anbiya' wa'l-Mursalin*, 1984.

This, in al-Maqdisi's view, is clear polytheism and turns a Muslim into an unbeliever.<sup>14</sup>

The theory of *al-wala' wa'l-bara'* as a means to brand rulers and their legislation as forms of polytheism is further developed in al-Maqdisi's other works. Relying on the example of Ibrahim used in Qur'an 60:4, in which believers are encouraged to show their enmity and hatred of polytheism, he stresses that all Muslims must disavow politicians and their laws. Al-Maqdisi considers the highest form of this disavowal to be jihad.<sup>15</sup> Unlike others, however, al-Maqdisi believes that this jihad should first and foremost be waged against the "near enemy" (i.e. the regimes in the Muslim world). While he does not object to fighting the "far enemy" (i.e. Israel, the United States, United Kingdom),<sup>16</sup> he deems the "apostasy" (*rida*) of Muslim leaders worse than the "original unbelief" (*kufr asli*) of Jews and Christians<sup>17</sup> and also uses Qur'an 9:123 to argue that the former should be fought first.<sup>18</sup> Al-Maqdisi thus believes that Muslims should show their loyalty to God by giving priority to the disavowal of their political leaders through jihad. Fighting the West, though important, should come later.<sup>19</sup>

14 Ibid. For more on the development of *al-wala' wa'l-bara'* and its role in al-Maqdisi's ideology, see Joas Wagemakers, "The Transformation of a Radical Concept: Al-Wala' wa'l-Bara' in the Ideology of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi," in Roel Meijer ed., *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (London: Hurst, forthcoming in 2008).

15 Ibid.; Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, *Kashf al-Niqab 'an Shari'at al-Ghbab*, 1988; Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, *Al-Kawashif al-Jaliyya fi Kufr al-Dawla al-Sa'udiyya*, 1989; Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, *Risalat Munasaba wa Tad-bkir ila ba'd al-Ikhwan*, no date provided.

16 Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, *Bara'at al-Muwahhidin min 'Ubud al-Tawaghit wa Amanihim li'l-Muharibin*, 2002.

For an excellent book dealing with the debate within Islamist circles over which of these two enemies to fight first, see Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy – Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

17 Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, *Hadhibi 'Aqidatuna*, 1997; Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, "Liqa' min khalaf Qadban al-Murtaddin 'Sana'a 1418," 1997.

18 Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, *Tabsir al-'Uqala' bi-Tal-bisat Ahl al-Tajabbum wa'l-Irja*, 1996; Al-Maqdisi, "Liqa' min khalaf Qadban al-Murtaddin 'Sana 1418."

19 For a more detailed and in-depth treatment of al-Maqdisi's ideology, see Joas Wagemakers, "A Purist Jihadi-Salafi: The Ideology of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi,"

### Revisionism?

For al-Maqdisi ever to be used by the authorities to discourage others from engaging in terrorism, it is clear from the above that he would have to change his ideas drastically. Several examples of the recent past have shown that it is certainly not impossible for radical ideologues to renounce some of their earlier views and take a new, more moderate approach. The Egyptian Jihad Organization, for example, apologized two years ago for its attacks on civilians,<sup>20</sup> and the Egyptian al-Jama'a al-

**"He is, therefore, unlikely to moderate others to such an extent that they will give up their radical ideas altogether."**

Islamiyya even revised its entire ideology in the 1990s along more moderate lines.<sup>21</sup> Could al-Maqdisi's critical comments on al-Zarqawi's conduct in Iraq signify a similar trend? Muhammad Abu Ruman, a journalist for the Arabic daily *al-Hayat*, believes they do. He argues that al-Maqdisi's criticism of his former pupil is simply the latest example of a revisionist trend in his thinking that began in the late 1990s.<sup>22</sup> While Abu Ruman is certainly correct to point out that al-Maqdisi has been critical of radical Muslims' activities for some time, a closer look at his writings shows that he has not revised his ideas at all and has been remarkably consistent throughout the years.

Al-Maqdisi's criticism of other radical Muslims can mostly be found in three of his writings. The first of these, a huge study on excommunication (*takfir*) of Muslims by other Muslims, scolds radicals for their casual use of this tool to legitimate violence against others. Al-Maqdisi delves into the Islamic legal intricacies

*British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (forthcoming).

20 'Abd al-Qadir b. 'Abd al-'Aziz [aka Dr. Fadl, who is Sayyid Imam al-Sharif], one of the most prominent Salafi-jihadi scholars and a former leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, also moderated some of his views later on.

21 For an in-depth treatment of this phenomenon, see Roel Meijer, "Commanding Good and Forbidding Wrong as a Principle of Social Action: The Case of the Egyptian al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya," in Meijer ed., *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*.

22 *Al-Hayat*, March 13, 2008.

of the validity of excommunication<sup>23</sup> and concludes that many of its current day applications, such as calling entire Muslim societies un-Islamic, are misguided and extreme.<sup>24</sup> Although these ideas are clearly meant to moderate the views of radical jihadists, they are not a revision of al-Maqdisi's earlier statements. None of al-Maqdisi's writings support the extreme views that he criticizes in this book. In fact, al-Maqdisi goes out of his way to point out to his readers that the leaders of the Muslim world are definitely infidels and that he is not criticizing the use of excommunication as such but that some Muslims have simply gone too far in applying it.<sup>25</sup>

The second of al-Maqdisi's writings criticizing other radicals is a study on jihad, in which he evaluates what results the various attempts to fight "the infidels" have yielded. In this book, he criticizes the recklessness of some fighters and laments their lack of knowledge of both Islam and the reality of the country in which they fight.<sup>26</sup> Again, however, al-Maqdisi does not criticize jihad and fighting itself. He stresses that he supports jihad and has had to pay the price for his views.<sup>27</sup> In fact, he praises the 9/11 hijackers for executing such a well-planned operation and states that the jihad needs more people like them.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, even though al-Maqdisi again criticizes young jihadists for being reckless, he sounds like a spiritual leader who feels "his" jihad has gone awry rather than a radical who recants his earlier beliefs.

Al-Maqdisi also uses moral arguments to call for a restriction on bloodshed in his book on jihad, as well as in his letter of advice to al-Zarqawi, the third of his critical writings. In both documents, he laments the great number of casualties among Muslims caused by jihadists and clearly states that many of the targets they select, such as mosques, churches and buses, may not be attacked according

23 Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, *Al-Risala al-Thalathiniyya fi'l-Tahdbir min al-Ghulu fi'l-Takfir*, 1998.

24 Ibid. Al-Maqdisi gives 33 examples of what he considers wrong forms of excommunication. All of these are dealt with in separate chapters.

25 Al-Maqdisi, *Al-Risala al-Thalathiniyya fi'l-Tahdbir min al-Ghulu fi'l-Takfir*.

26 Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, *Waqafat ma'a Thamrat al-Jihad*, 2004.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.



to Islamic law.<sup>29</sup> Al-Maqdisi also criticizes the Islamic legal reasoning radicals use for suicide bombings, explaining that killing innocent Muslims is not allowed by pointing out the difference between collateral damage and intentionally killing Muslim women and children.<sup>30</sup> Once again, however, al-Maqdisi does not reject any of his former beliefs. He has never advocated attacking mosques and churches and although he criticizes the reckless use of suicide bombings, he explicitly confirms that they are a legitimate means to fight the enemy, as long as they are used for the right purpose.<sup>31</sup>

### Counter-Terrorism

It is clear that al-Maqdisi, though critical of jihadists' reckless behavior and lack of knowledge, has not changed his views at all. His criticism of al-Zarqawi in his interview with al-Jazeera, though part of a longer trend, should therefore not be seen as a sign of revisionism. All of the more moderate positions he has taken in the past 10 years are completely compatible with his earlier writings and in many cases simply confirm what he has written before. This means he still believes the leaders of the Muslim world are infidels and considers jihad against them (and the West) to be legitimate. This seemingly excludes al-Maqdisi as a useful tool to combat terrorism.

Still, al-Maqdisi's use as a factor in counter-terrorism may be greater than the above suggests, since a major problem in using former radicals to discourage others from engaging in terrorism is that they lose all credibility in the eyes of the most committed extremists. The latter are unlikely to be turned around by someone who has, in their view, sold out to the enemy.<sup>32</sup> Al-Maqdisi, however, cannot possibly be accused of selling out to anyone and has his prison record to prove it. The credibility and authority this gives him must mean something in the eyes of jihadists. Al-Maqdisi's criticism, precisely because it is coming from a fellow radical who has not changed his views, could therefore

have a moderating influence on those committed terrorists who are unlikely to be swayed by anyone else.

In practice, this policy would mean allowing al-Maqdisi to spread his ideas without interfering with him too much as long as he does not materially support terrorism. The drawback of such a policy is that, while possibly helping to moderate an extremely violent fringe among jihadists, al-Maqdisi's still radical writings might simultaneously inspire a whole generation of new terrorists. Considering the fact that the Jordanian government apparently does not have a viable case to keep al-Maqdisi in prison, however, this policy of non-interference may be less unacceptable than it sounds. Moreover, if all jihadists in Iraq had done what al-Maqdisi advised them, there probably would have been a lot less bloodshed.

### Conclusion

The release of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, one of the most important radical Islamic ideologues alive, seemingly has very little impact on the worldwide efforts to fight terrorism. His ideas, though critical of excesses among jihadists, have always been supportive of violence against both the governments of the Muslim world as well as the West. Al-Maqdisi is, therefore, unlikely to moderate others to such an extent that they will give up their radical ideas altogether. Still, his relative moderation supported by his credibility as an unbending scholar may influence those whose strong commitment and well-informed ideas cannot be influenced by other, lesser figures. Whether governments are willing to give al-Maqdisi relatively free reign for such a new and risky approach, however, remains to be seen.

*Joas Wagemakers is a lecturer and Ph.D. candidate at Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands. His research focuses on Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi's influence on the Jihadi-Salafi movement. He has written several articles on this subject, including "A Purist Jihadi-Salafi: The Ideology of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi" (forthcoming in the British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies) and "The Transformation of a Radical Concept: Al-Wala' wa-l-Bara' in the Ideology of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi" in Roel Meijer ed., Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement (forthcoming summer 2008).*

## Human Smuggling and Trafficking: An International Terrorist Security Risk?

By Jacob Townsend and Hayder Mili

INTERNATIONAL BORDERS ARE becoming more of a challenge for terrorists, encouraging stronger links to organized crime in the businesses of people smuggling and trafficking.<sup>1</sup> Quantitatively speaking, smuggled terrorists are dwarfed by the diffusion of ideology and training via the internet. They are, however, qualitatively much more significant, and the support rendered by organized crime makes them difficult to eliminate. This analysis will be of interest to law enforcement, national security agencies and policymakers in contributing to the threat assessment on the terrorism dimension of human smuggling and trafficking.

### An Expanding Market

Since 2001, al-Qa'ida's infrastructure has weakened and many important cadres have been killed. Decentralization has resulted, and the contemporary counter-terrorism challenge posed by radical Islamism is one of identifying, disrupting and destroying operationally autonomous cells. International cooperation has frozen terrorist assets and impaired the operational procedures of groups attempting to organize globally. The coordination of migration databases<sup>2</sup> and widespread improvements in document security have raised the logistical demands for international terrorists. There is no doubt that training and indoctrination can occur without physical contact, notably via the internet; there is also no doubt, however, that this is inferior to face-to-face instruction, certainly for training<sup>3</sup> and probably for indoctrination.

29 Ibid.; Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, *Al-Zarqawi: Munasara wa-Munasaha*, 2004.

30 Al-Maqdisi, *Waqafat ma'a Thamrat al-Jihad*.

31 Al-Maqdisi, *Al-Zarqawi: Munasara wa-Munasaha*.

32 The recent revisionism of former Egyptian Islamic Jihad leader and long-time prisoner Sayyid Imam, for example, met with a spirited rebuttal by Ayman al-Zawahiri.

1 Smuggling is the procurement, for material gain, of the illegal entry of someone into a state of which they are neither citizen nor resident. Trafficking is the movement of a person for exploitation, defined by a lack of consent. Smuggling is always transnational, whereas trafficking can also occur within a single state.

2 An example is the Regional Movement Alert System, created under the auspices of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation organization. It allows real-time sharing of passport data between the United States, New Zealand and Australia, with plans to incorporate new members.

3 The problems that terrorists face in training themselves with little expert assistance were demonstrated in

The best method for groups wanting cells in multiple countries is still to infiltrate a member, with recruiters directed at long-term development and operatives for specific attacks. The alternative is to establish a base in a safe haven and import recruits, requiring ex-filtration from target countries and subsequent re-infiltration. Even homegrown operatives need migration to undertake effective training. This centralized training option has become more difficult with greater pressure on safe havens. Nevertheless, travel for instruction continues, especially to Iraq and Afghanistan, which act as giant training centers. Recent examples are available in the Sinjar Records, documenting the movement of militants into Iraq, many steps of which must have involved illegal migration.<sup>4</sup> One such route moves militants from Europe to Tangiers in Morocco and onward to Syria.<sup>5</sup>

In key areas for jihadist activity—such as the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan and North Africa—cross-border community links remain useful and are often sufficient for infiltration. Entering the Western heartland is another matter. Relative to these higher barriers, terrorists have diminished mobility and benefit from the services of specialized networks. Forging documents and negotiating secure transport are challenges much easier to overcome with a network extending into the target territory. While terrorist groups may have contacts in much of the Western heartland, it has become rare for them to possess the expertise or access required to facilitate clandestine movement.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, organized criminal groups have demonstrated proficiency in combining any or all of the elements of forged documents, concealed transportation, corrupt officials and secure residence. Like terrorist groups, criminal networks have responded to law enforcement and globalization by decentralizing. Driven by profit, operating in illicit industries and against state power, such networks are

economically efficient. Human smuggling and trafficking is a profitable business with strong and inelastic demand—in other words, any extra costs that criminal networks incur in developing and operating their expertise can be passed onto clients.

As the risks of international travel rise, terrorist groups are encouraged to move only in moments of necessity. Maintaining permanent capacities for irregular moments is inefficient. Organized criminal groups are better at organizing clandestine movement, they are available for hire and can be engaged with a high level of anonymity. Ultimately, the security of a terrorist's attempt to migrate is a question of their ability to pay.<sup>7</sup>

#### Masking Movements

Robbery, petty crime and trafficking in various goods<sup>8</sup> are common means of subsistence for terrorist cells. Some have developed sophisticated divisions of labor under which one group runs criminal enterprises, while another plans and undertakes operations. A few include in their repertoire the forcible movement of people, such as described by a Tajik victim: “the mujahideen in Tajikistan routinely kidnap children and release them after extorting ransom, steal people's belongings, including their livestock.”<sup>9</sup> Terrorist kidnappings of foreigners or locals for ransom have increased in North Africa, while they have remained a constant in Iraq and Afghanistan.

With global annual profits in the billions of dollars, a slice of the illicit migration market is valuable to terrorists for finance alone.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the 1990s, the Tamil Tigers were involved in human trafficking and smuggling to

countries such as Canada. More recently, investigations into a Milan-based Ansar al-Islam network uncovered cells responsible for organizing safe houses, recruiting volunteers and raising upwards of a million euros smuggling Kurdish migrants into Europe.<sup>11</sup> These funds were then reinvested into smuggling around 200 militants in the opposite direction, from Europe into Iraq.

Terrorists also use people-moving connections for operational purposes. In Belarus and Ukraine, border guards describe networks used to smuggle Chechen militants out of Russia through the western Commonwealth of Independent States region. The same officials readily admit that it is often impossible to determine the country of origin of illegal migrants for repatriation since they almost never carry any documentation.

In Portugal, the national intelligence service observed a regular pattern of terrorist fundraising through drug trafficking, theft and illegal immigration operations.<sup>12</sup> An Italian example of criminal cooperation for terrorist migration involved three persons convicted in May 2005 of providing al-Qa`ida members in Europe and the Middle East with support, including the provision of false documents. Belgium is considered a major hub for human smuggling to England and onward to the United States, with extremist groups exploiting connections between Indian/Pakistani people smuggling networks and Islamic fundamentalists. An important route reportedly runs from India through Uzbekistan, Moscow, Ukraine, Slovakia, Austria, Italy and Belgium.<sup>13</sup> Long-distance smuggling routes are more often than not circuitous and change frequently to avoid detection. The modus operandi varies within and between routes. Some border controls may be completely circumvented, while others require fraudulent documents and an international flight; others require a bribe. At present, terrorists are more likely to circumvent borders than attempt to claim refugee status, as was the case in the past.

the poor technical planning for the Glasgow and London attacks in 2007.

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

5 Raphaël Mergui, “Les Islamistes passent par la route du Haschisch,” *Marianne*, September 11, 2004.

6 Jihadist logistical support structures in Europe were significantly weakened following the anti-GIA campaign launched by French (and other European) law enforcement in the mid-1990s.

7 “The W-5 of Human Smuggling to Canada,” RCMP Criminal Intelligence Directorate, October 2006. Such services do not come cheap; according to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, fees to reach Canada from Southeast Asia, for example, can reach US\$60,000.

8 Trafficked products have even included precious metals and endangered species. See Adrian Levy and Cathy Scott-Clark, “Poaching for Bin Laden,” *Guardian*, May 5, 2007.

9 Ismail Khan, “How Tajik Boy Joined ‘Jihad,’” *Dawn*, October 23, 2004; “Court Rejects Bail Plea of 10 Foreigners,” *Dawn*, April 29, 2006.

10 The ILO estimated \$31.6 billion of annual profit in trafficked persons alone. See Patrick Belser, *Forced Labour and Human Trafficking: Estimating the Profits* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2005).

11 Lorenzo Vidino, “Jihad from Europe,” *Journal of International Security Affairs*, September 27, 2005.

12 “International Jihadist Networks are a Threat to Portugal: Report,” *Agence France-Presse*, March 30, 2006.

13 Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, July 2007; *Knack*, July 11, 2007.

### Servants or Sympathizers?

While criminality gives financial autonomy to a terrorist cell, it places greater stress on anonymity and the capacity to plan terrorism. It also brings terrorists into more frequent contact with criminal networks. Terrorists' financial aims are only slightly higher than subsistence and they tend toward small-scale criminality or retailing for organized crime. For example, extremists in Central Asia increasingly rely on organized crime to import heroin from Afghanistan, finding it more efficient and secure to concentrate on retailing.<sup>14</sup>

Criminals have varying levels of knowledge when smuggling terrorists. On the one hand, if terrorists conceal their identity, criminals may be more willing to offer services. On the other hand, if terrorists can cultivate a sympathetic criminal network, it may increase operational security. Ethnic and cultural links between terrorists and criminals facilitate cooperation but are not necessary when the profit motive is at work. Nevertheless, for terrorists whose priority is infiltration and secrecy, collaboration with criminal outfits that share a language and/or culture is preferable, while human smugglers generally "recruit" within their own ethno-cultural group. Some criminal groups or individuals may, out of ethnic/cultural loyalty, even partially sympathize with terrorists' aspirations. Notably, symbiosis can emerge in prison, where extremists convert fellow inmates.<sup>15</sup>

In Morocco, one recently apprehended terrorist cell had prepared human smuggling rings in anticipation of attacks. The networks were set to intervene immediately following the operation to remove the operatives to Europe or the Middle East (Egypt, Tunisia and Libya). This suggests a high degree of collusion, or at least that the criminal group had some understanding of its clients.<sup>16</sup> Similar relationships developed between

the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and Algerian criminals during the 1990s in both Algeria and France.<sup>17</sup> In Central Asia, an ex-member of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan explained that he had used Iranian drug traffickers to move him through the Iranian city of Mashaad.<sup>18</sup>

Some organized criminal groups pursue specific industries, while some diversify heavily. In August 2005, arrests linked to a plot during the pope's funeral

### **"These movements are sharp, deadly needles in the haystacks of global migration and terrorist-criminal collaboration."**

suggested that terrorists can benefit from the ability to use criminal links for multiple purposes. Notably, weapons for the operation—missile launchers and explosives—were to be trafficked to Europe using human smuggling routes through Slovenia and the northeastern Italian port of Trieste.<sup>19</sup> The implications of this type of smuggling for international security are clear, especially taking into account the stated aim by terrorist groups to use weapons of mass destruction.

### Trafficked for Terrorism?

More sinister than terrorists using people smuggling to transport themselves is utilizing those same networks for unwitting recruitment. Human trafficking is movement without consent and generally occurs to service illicit labor markets. Emerging evidence suggests that terrorist groups may traffic children to obtain new, pliant recruits—a common form of recruitment in many conflicts across Africa. Jihadists now seem to have adopted the tactic, at least in Waziristan. Lieutenant General Safdar Hussain,

who leads Pakistan's hunt for al-Qa`ida militants in northwestern Pakistan, reported to Radio Free Europe the presence of young foreigners, "boys whose average age is 16 or 17 years, and it is my assessment that most of them have either been kidnapped or they were sold...and after bringing them here, these [boys] are used for terrorism."<sup>20</sup> Whether smuggled or trafficked, most youths are reported to come from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan.<sup>21</sup>

### Responses

Some governments have become concerned about people smuggling as a potential national security menace. Moving from cognition to action is crucial, however, and much more research and analysis is needed in this area.

Collaboration and cross-pollination between terrorists and criminals create opportunities for clandestine terrorist movement. Criminal involvement in smuggling terrorists is a small sub-set of terrorist-criminal interaction. Clandestine movements by terrorists comprise a tiny sub-set of illegal immigration. Many more people are exposed to jihadist propaganda and training via the internet than undertake migration to receive or impart instruction. The movement of terrorists and trainees, however, has a special importance for global jihadism. It enables the most powerful processes of conversion from a disgruntled individual to a radicalized and capable terrorist. It is also the means of placing a team in a target country prior to a planned attack. These movements are sharp, deadly needles in the haystacks of global migration and terrorist-criminal collaboration.

Disrupting terrorist smuggling networks may require stiffer penalties for smugglers in key transit regions such as the CIS and more awareness-raising of the threat convergence among law enforcement agencies in the West, particularly border staff. An important improvement would be strong cooperation between counter-terrorism units and people-smuggling teams—in the reverse direction to that usually imagined. For

14 Personal interviews, Tajik and Kyrgyz law enforcement, September 19, 2005, June 29 and July 1, 2006.

15 Cecilia Gabizon, "De plus en plus de détenus tentes par l'islamisme Radical," *Le Figaro*, May 2, 2005; International Crisis Group, "'Deradicalisation' and Indonesian Prisons," November 19, 2007.

16 Abdelhak Najib and Karim Serraj, "Le Trafic de Drogue, L'émigration Clandestine et le Terrorisme Islamiste," *La Gazette du Maroc*, February 9, 2004.

17 The above examples notwithstanding, it should be assumed that most criminal groups would shun the heightened law enforcement attention this type of activity would bring.

18 Kathy Gannon, "Uzbeks Find Their Way Home Through Network of Terrorist Trails," Associated Press, June 12, 2005.

19 Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Transnational Threats Update* 3:10 (2005); "Italy, Croatia Jointly Foil Group's Suspected Plan for Attack in Italy—Press," BBC Monitoring European, August 26, 2005.

20 Antoine Blua, "Central Asia: Pakistan Says Militants Kidnap Central Asian Boys For Training," RFE/RL, December 2004.

21 Qudssia Akhlaque, "Hunt Launched for Key Militants," *Dawn*, December 18, 2004.



defensive purposes, it is important for counter-terrorism agencies to inform immigration agencies of terrorist identities. Yet, for proactive counter-terrorism, it is crucial that immigration agencies are sensitized to the possibility of unidentified or disguised terrorists swimming in the sea of "ordinary" people smuggling. Sensitization is particularly important as intelligence agencies become more involved in monitoring and disrupting smuggling networks, which risks solidifying a one-way information flow from intelligence agencies to law enforcement/immigration. The latter remain more comprehensively involved in irregular migration and need to guard against passivity in assessing the counter-terrorism intelligence significance of people smuggling and trafficking. They must understand that they are not just implementing agencies for counter-terrorism, but also information generators.

Improvements should be extended to origin countries, including greater interoperability between databases and capacity-building in areas like document fraud and immigration data analysis. Caution is warranted, however, in securitizing further the issues of labor migration and trafficking. Many countries are responding overly aggressively, in the process compromising the intelligence value of migrants arrested. Human smuggling is more than a law enforcement or labor migration challenge. Transnational crime is a national security threat in its relationship to terrorism (as well as other reasons). A migrant worker looking for a better life should not be confused with terrorists infiltrating, but the latter is clearly a danger.

*Jacob Townsend is an independent analyst of transnational security threats. His academic and popular publishing covers the drug trade, counter-terrorism, coalition strategy in Afghanistan, arms trafficking and border control. He has been a consultant to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Central Asia and in the Asia-Pacific. He is now based in Australia.*

*Hayder Mili is an independent researcher. He has published analytical and academic articles on terrorism, the drug trade and law enforcement responses. He holds master's degrees in Strategic Studies and International Relations from the Sorbonne University in Paris. He is currently based in Central Asia.*

## Combating Terrorism with Non-Lethal Weapons

By John B. Alexander

IN THE CONDUCT of the global war on terrorism, certain trends in terrorist activities are clearly emerging. To create the most damage as well as a lasting psychological effect, attacks often have taken place in densely populated areas with civilians as the primary targets. Given the likelihood of collocation of terrorists and non-combatants, it is necessary to reconsider the use of area non-lethal weapons, including incapacitating agents.

It is worth considering a few examples of recent civilian-targeted attacks. On March 11, 2004, in Madrid, 10 near-simultaneous explosions ripped through four commuter trains of the Cercanías transportation system with devastating effect. The backpack bombs killed 191 riders and wounded another 1,755. In addition to the physical casualties, the timing of the attack was influential in the outcome of the general elections held three days later.<sup>1</sup> The following year, on July 7, 2005, domestic suicide bombers similarly attacked the London public transportation system. Initially, three bombs were detonated within 50 seconds of each other at disparate locations along the Underground. Approximately one hour later, a bomber blew himself up on a double-decker bus at Tavistock Square. The attacks resulted in 52 fatalities and more than 700 wounded passengers.<sup>2</sup> On July 11, 2006, attacks in Mumbai, India demonstrated similar, well-coordinated planning and were executed with devastating effects. These incidents included the detonation of seven bombs within 11 minutes at various locations along the suburban railway system during the evening rush hour. Casualties were high and included 209 riders killed and more than 700 others wounded.<sup>3</sup>

In each of these terrorist incidents, clearly the objective was both causing casualties

and generating fear throughout the civilian sector. Although different groups were responsible for each attack, there were several common factors. Foremost, every incident took place in a major metropolitan area. The attacks required a high degree of coordination and sophistication to carry out. The perpetrators were either local, or had the ability to operate openly in their environment. None of the targets were military in nature or represented national symbols of power.

These attacks, and others like them, foretell the nature of future terrorist incidents. Specifically, most often they will take place in densely populated cities and the assailants will be almost indistinguishable from their potential victims. Under such conditions, the ability of counter-terrorist organizations to apply force is, at best, limited. Mistakes can and do happen, such as the London shooting death of Brazilian Jean Charles de Menezes on July 22, 2005, only two weeks after the bombings there.<sup>4</sup>

If collocation of terrorists and innocent civilians becomes a norm, then new alternative capabilities need to be explored. The best cases to examine regarding alternatives took place in Russia. The outcomes were dramatically different, but one offers an example of a highly controversial technique for resolving hostage situations.

### Incapacitating Agents

On October 23, 2002, 42 armed Chechen terrorists stormed a theater in the Dubrovka area of Moscow where *Nord-Ost* was being performed and took approximately 850 hostages. During the next two and a half days, discussions were held between the terrorists and the Russian government. The history of the Chechen terrorists was well-known, and they had a propensity for violence; in 1995, they had taken a hospital in Budyonnovsk and massacred all of the hostages. In an unusual turn, the Moscow terrorists were about evenly split between men and women, and many came wearing bombs. Although negotiations were initiated, it was believed that the terrorists planned to blow up the theater with all of the hostages

1 "Scores Die in Madrid Bomb Carnage," BBC, March 11, 2004.

2 Paul Murphy, MP, "Report into the London Terrorist Attack of 7 July 2005," Intelligence and Security Committee, Parliament (UK), May 2006.

3 "Tuesday Terror: Six Blasts Rock Mumbai Railway Stations," *Times of India*, July 11, 2006.

4 Due to misidentification, and a series of circumstances that culminated in no spare reaction time, Menezes was shot in the head seven times by officers who had no good alternatives. See Ken Livingston, Mayor of London, "Statement on IPCC Report," August 2, 2007.

and themselves when they thought they could get the most publicity.

After gunfire was heard in the theater, the Russian government made a crucial decision to end the standoff. They authorized the use of a previously secret chemical agent designed to cause rapid incapacitation of everyone in the theater. While never formally acknowledged, the agent, called M-99, is thought to be fentanyl-based and capable of rendering humans unconscious in a matter of a few seconds. The introduction of the gas through the ventilation system had the intended effect. Immediately upon application of the agent, *Spetsnaz* troops entered the building and dispatched most of the terrorists. The details of the rescue operation that followed remain clouded. It is certain that at least 129 of the hostages died as a result of inhalation of the gas; however, more than 600 were rescued.<sup>5</sup>

The application of this chemical incapacitating agent was at once successful and unfortunate. The rescue of hundreds of hostages quickly became overshadowed by the secrecy of the chemical makeup of the aerosol and controversy regarding legality of using that agent. The rules of engagement in hostage situations, however, are that once casualties occur all attempts are made to save as many hostages as possible. Additionally, the laws regarding use of chemical agents in domestic situations are quite different from use in war.

There were several operational errors that could have significantly lowered the fatality rate that night. Adequate transportation was not available to move hundreds of unconscious patients. Fentanyl is a known respiratory inhibitor; there could have been arrangements made to ensure all of the unconscious victims remained breathing by assigning an assistant to each victim. Finally, the Russians authorizing the operation could have better informed the medical staffs about the nature of the substance being used. That information would have allowed for more effective treatment. No rescue operation of that magnitude, however, had ever been attempted previously. Despite the efforts of the *Spetsnaz* forces in saving the hostages, the world attention

remained focused on the chemical warfare aspects of the operation.

About two years later, on September 1, 2004, Chechen separatists initiated another massive terrorist incident. Now known as the Beslan Massacre, several dozen terrorists took about 1,200 hostages at a school on the first day of the academic year. Having learned from the Dubrovka operation, the terrorists quickly smashed out the windows to increase the circulation of air and make introduction of an incapacitating aerosol more difficult. This incident ended tragically for all involved. On day three of the siege, chaos erupted with massive

### **“Both chemical and electromagnet technologies offer the ability to improve rescue odds.”**

gunfire and detonation of several of the terrorists' pre-placed bombs. Unlike the Moscow theater, the military and police units surrounding the Beslan school did not have a clear plan in place in case the situation deteriorated quickly. As a result, the death toll was 368 killed, including many young children, and an additional 738 severely injured.<sup>6</sup>

Research into incapacitating agents is not new, nor exclusively Russian. In the 1960s and 1970s, the U.S. Army also explored the use of fentanyl and other similar agents.<sup>7</sup> Upon signing the Biological and Toxin Warfare Convention in 1972, it was determined that even research in that area was in contravention of the treaties and work was stopped. As recently as 1997, the conventions have become even more restrictive, banning the use of riot control agents and flame weapons on the battlefield.<sup>8</sup> Concurrently, the situations facing military units have become more complex. There has been a significant rise

in peace support operations in which there is a need to apply force, but at minimum levels, especially when large numbers of non-combatants are present.

Despite the obvious conundrum, the mood of the international community, especially of Europeans, is to take the most conservative position regarding chemical weapons.<sup>9</sup> They cite the slippery slope argument, suggesting that use of any chemical agent would lead to use of all chemical agents. In addition, there are other new technologies that are equally contentious.

#### **Energy Weapons**

Anti-personnel directed energy weapons may also be useful as area weapons in counter-terrorism situations. They have encountered similar legal issues that have delayed their entry onto the battlefield. The technology needed to field the Active Denial System (ADS) has been demonstrated and could have been deployed years ago. Due to the uniqueness of the effects (temporary pain that stops immediately after exposure), the Department of Defense has opted not to send the ADS into Iraq.<sup>10</sup>

The ADS provides a new dimension in directed energy. This beam weapon is highly directional and quickly induces pain. It can affect targets accurately that are many hundreds of meters distant and would be useful in separating terrorists from civilians. Traveling at the speed of light, the system can also inhibit snipers who must expose themselves in order to shoot. Operating with experienced counter-sniper spotters and rapid response time, a single system could provide suppression over a broad area.

There are other developments in directed energy weapons that would be effective in isolating terrorists. These are anti-materiel systems that can damage or destroy sensitive electronics. Advances have been made in systems that can block communications, incapacitate vehicles, or even predetonate explosives.

5 Paul Wax, MD, et al., “Unexpected ‘Gas’ Casualties in Moscow: A Medical Toxicology Perspective,” *Annals of Emergency Medicine* 41 (2003): pp. 700-705.

6 Uwe Klusmann, “The Beslan Aftermath: New Papers Critical of Russian Security Forces,” *Der Spiegel*, July 4, 2005.

7 Chemical Warfare Convention, effective April 29, 1997.

8 “The Protocol for the Prohibition of the use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Biological Methods of Warfare,” signed in Geneva, Switzerland, June 17, 1925.

9 In November 2005, COL George Fenton, USMC (Ret.) and I appeared before a group of Chemical Warfare Convention delegates in The Hague in support of incapacitating weapons. The European participants were adamantly opposed to the use of any chemical agents.

10 David Martin, “The Pentagon’s Ray Gun,” 60 Minutes, March 2, 2008.

## Conclusion

Given the high probability that troops will encounter terrorists in close proximity to non-combatants, it is imperative that new, innovative technologies be explored. Having the options of shooting or not shooting is unacceptable. This suggests a two-pronged effort in providing soldiers with additional capabilities. First, research into incapacitating technologies must be dramatically increased. Due to the variability of human physiology, it is unlikely that a perfect solution will be found. The differential between rapid incapacitation and death is small. Even under the best of circumstances, anesthesiologists lose patients. Given the exigency of hostage situations, however, calculated risks must be deemed acceptable. Both chemical and electromagnetic technologies offer the ability to improve rescue odds.

The second axis may be more difficult, as tremendous emotional interest has been vested in prohibiting chemical weapons. Initiated nearly a century ago, for worthy and altruistic purposes, societies have sought to ban such weapons that can inflict widespread death. A paradox now exists, however, as tremendous advances have been made in chemistry and it is now possible to employ such weapons in a life-conserving mode. Just as the global war on terrorism has forced a reevaluation of concepts of conflict, it also suggests that perspectives on chemical and electromagnetic technologies are changed. The goal is to provide the capability to incapacitate an area and allow rescuers to sort out terrorists from hostages.

*Dr. John Alexander is a former U.S. Army colonel who served in key positions in Special Forces, Intelligence, and Research & Development. Upon retirement, he joined Los Alamos National Laboratory and introduced Non-Lethal Defense concepts for which he is an internationally recognized expert. More recently he served with the Army Science Board. He is the author of several books and many articles on international security issues. Currently, he is a senior fellow at the Joint Special Operations University.*

## Evaluating the Terrorist Threat Posed by African-American Muslim Groups

By Christopher Heffelfinger

THE FBI INTRODUCTION to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) file on Clarence Smith—aka Clarence 13X—reads only, “Smith was the leader of the ‘Five Percenters,’ a notorious Harlem street gang. He was shot to death in 1969.”<sup>1</sup> Yet, as a lyrical sample from Lord Jamar (a prominent Five Percenter and hip-hop artist) reads in his *Greatest Story Never Told*, “Allah [Clarence Smith] was assassinated in 1969, that case was never solved. His movement survived him, today it’s known as the Nation of Gods and Earths.”<sup>2</sup> The Five Percenters are just one facet of indigenous Muslim evolution in the United States; others, like Jama’at al-Fuqara’, retain ties to Pakistan and are ideological affiliates of militant Salafist groups such as al-Qa’ida. This article will examine trends among three predominantly African-American Islamic movements, at least one of which should be considered a domestic terrorism concern for the United States. It also serves to provide counter-terrorism professionals with knowledge enabling them to differentiate terrorist threats from more benign religious groups.

### The Five Percent Nation

Clarence 13X was initially a member of the Nation of Islam (NOI) and attended its Temple Number Seven in Harlem, where Malcolm X preached from 1960 to 1963.<sup>3</sup> One rumor claims that he left the NOI because he questioned the divinity of Wallace Fard, the founder of the NOI who claimed to bring divine inspiration to Elijah Muhammad. Clarence 13X split with the NOI in 1963.<sup>4</sup> He adopted the name “Allah” and set to the streets of Harlem to educate fellow black Americans on the Supreme Mathematics, the Supreme Alphabet and the tenets of his movement, which

claimed that 85% of men are easily misled, 10% understand some truth but use it for their own benefit, and five percent are enlightened divine beings.<sup>5</sup> Under Clarence 13X, or Allah, the Five Percenters (also called the Five Percent Nation) established a headquarters in Harlem—the Allah School in Mecca—in 1966.<sup>6</sup> Today, the movement includes Busta Rhymes, members of Wu Tang Clan, Jus Allah and many other high-profile hip-hop artists.

The FOIA FBI file on Clarence Smith reveals some of the details pertaining to their concern over his activities:

...letterhead memorandums to the Bureau dated 6/2/65, 6/9/65 and 7/9/65, all captioned “DISTURBANCE BY GROUP CALLED ‘FIVE PERCENTERS,’ HARLEM, NEW YORK CITY, 5/31/65; RACIAL MATTERS,” which contained subject under the name CLARENCE 13X SMITH aka “Allah,” and which further reflected that subject was the recognized leader of the “Five Percenters.”

It is noted that records of the Bureau of Special Services, (BSS), New York City Police Department, (NYCPD), reflects subject’s true name as CLARENCE SMITH JOWERS and as CLARENCE SMITH JOWARS, however, for uniformity, subject’s true last name will be carried as JOWARS until such time as investigation determines the true spelling of subject’s last name.

CLARENCE SMITH JOWARS, aka Clarence 13X, a Negro male, born 2/21/28 in Virginia, city not known, NYCPD # B 612230, resided in Apartment 5E, 21 West 112<sup>th</sup> St., NYC, from August, 1954, through January, 1964. Subject has Social Security Number 228-28-0034. Subject served in the US Army under the name CLARENCE SMITH JOWARS or CLARENCE SMITH from 10/29/52, through 10/29/54, and had Army Serial Number 51207085. Subject had the

1 FBI File #100-444636, available at <http://foia.fbi.gov/foiaindex/smith.htm>.

2 One site that includes the lyrics from the *Greatest Story Never Told* is [www.lyricstime.com/lord-jamar-greatest-story-never-told-lyrics.html](http://www.lyricstime.com/lord-jamar-greatest-story-never-told-lyrics.html).

3 Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 101-103.

4 Ibid.

5 Mattias Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 225.

6 Michael Muhammad Knight, *The Five Percenters* (Oxford: One World Publications, 2007).



rank of Private First Class, served in Korea, and was last assigned to Company "F," 39<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Ft. Dix, New Jersey.<sup>7</sup>

The final assignment is peculiar, for coincidence if no other reason. Ft. Dix was the site of the foiled plot by six young Muslim men arrested in 2007 for planning to essentially embark on a shooting spree within the base and kill as many U.S. servicemen as possible.<sup>8</sup> The case is still awaiting trial. Ft. Dix is significant to African-American history, as in 1969 "there were rebellions at the military prisons of Fort Dix, Fort Jackson, three times at Fort Riley, Camp Pendleton, and others. At Fort Dix, one of the prisoner demands was: 'Free Huey P. Newton, the New York Panther 21, the Presidio 27, and all political prisoners!'"<sup>9</sup>

Toward the end of Clarence Smith's FBI File, it reads:

On 11/16/65, [REDACTED] BSS, NYCPD, advised SA that on 11/16/65, subject [...] appeared in New York State Supreme Court, NYC, and was found "unable to understand the charges against him." Subject was remanded to the custody of the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene for an indefinite confinement.<sup>10</sup>

He was assassinated in 1969 in a case that remains unsolved. Curiously, the latter pages of Clarence Smith's FBI file read: "Subject is a Negro male, born 2/21/28 or 2/22/28, at Danville, Virginia."<sup>11</sup> At one of Jama'at al-Fuqara's (Community of the Impoverished, JF) compounds, called "Red House,"<sup>12</sup>

24 members of the compound were convicted of firearms violations.<sup>13</sup> Red House sits about 66 miles from Danville, VA, Clarence Smith's birthplace. The locations of JF's compounds often appear laden with symbolism, but it is not yet known if the proximity of this compound to Danville has any larger significance.

What relevance do the Five Percenters have to terrorism? There is no material link between the Five Percent Nation (nor fringe groups like the Seas of David) and terrorism, but they are on a graduating spectrum in terms of

### **"A number of JF members have fought overseas, including in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Kashmir, Bosnia and Lebanon."**

radicalization. To the extreme of the Five Percent Nation is the highly militant Jama'at al-Fuqara' that strongly rejects the tenets of the Nation of Gods and Earths,<sup>14</sup> and instead adheres to a Salafist Islam akin to that of al-Qa'ida. Members may move toward the more militant and austere Islam of JF if they feel the Five Percenters are ineffective at effecting societal change, or if they can be convinced that their doctrine is blasphemous per Salafist norms.

#### **Jama'at al-Fuqara'**

The Salafist Jama'at al-Fuqara' is a much more potentially threatening group. It could have as many as 30 compounds in the United States and Canada, with affiliates in the Caribbean. At these compounds, members engage in tactical training exercises and weapons training, and explosives caches have been uncovered in at least one instance. Islamberg, in Hancock, NY, is considered to be JF's headquarters. Paul Williams, who did extensive study on the group, states,

lications Occasional Papers Series, Florida International University, Dialogue #135, 1992.

13 Paul L. Williams, "Springtime in Islamberg: Radical Muslim Paramilitary Compound Flourishes in Upper New York State," Canada Free Press, May 11, 2007.

14 The Nation of Gods and Earths is the current name of the Five Percenters movement.

Though primarily based in Lahore, Pakistan, Jamaat ul-Fuqra has operational headquarters in New York and openly recruits through various social service organizations in the U.S., including the prison system. Members live in hamaats or compounds, such as Islamberg, where they agree to abide by the laws of Jamaat ul-Fuqra, which are considered to be above local, state and federal authority.<sup>15</sup>

Although JF is estimated to be 95% African-American, it is not purely an Afro-nationalist movement in the United States. Its ties to overseas militant Salafist trends clearly run much deeper. Sometime in the late 1990s, Jama'at al-Fuqara' changed its name to the "Muslims of America" and still operates as such.

It is possible there is some resonance in ideas between followers of the Five Percent Nation and followers of Jama'at al-Fuqara'. George Johnson, Jr., a retired serviceman, security analyst and African-American, said,

I have never personally known an admitted member of Al-Fuqara'. However, some of my Black Muslim friends and relatives who belong to various other Afro-centric and mainstream Islamic sects (NOI, Ansar Allah, 5 per centers, Bilalians, etc.) express some of the same doctrines and beliefs and are sympathetic to Al-Fuqara's ideas.<sup>16</sup>

Yet, JF's ideology is drastically different than that of NOI, the Five Percenters, or Seas of David. It was founded by a Pakistani cleric, Shaykh Mubarak 'Ali Gilani, in Brooklyn in 1980, when he first visited the United States.<sup>17</sup> Shaykh Gilani's guiding principle is to "purify" the Islamic umma through violence. One retired intelligence official with expertise on militant Islam explained in September 2007,

At one point they ran private

15 Williams, "Springtime in Islamberg: Radical Muslim Paramilitary Compound Flourishes in Upper New York State."

16 Personal interview, George Johnson, September 14, 2007.

17 For more information, see the South Asia Terrorism Portal file on Jama'at al-Fuqara', located at [www.satp.org](http://www.satp.org).

7 FBI File #100-444636, available at <http://foia.fbi.gov/smith/smith1.pdf>.

8 See Troy Graham, "Man who Supplied Guns in Alleged Fort Dix Terror Plot Sentenced to 20 Months," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 1, 2008.

9 "Black GIs, Rebellion and the Fall of the Flag," *Revolutionary Worker* #994, February 14, 1999.

10 FBI File #100-444636.

11 Ibid.

12 Ironically, Red House shares the name of the parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. The building was stormed by Jamaat al-Muslimin, an Afro-Caribbean Islamist movement, in July 1990. The group took hostages, including the prime minister, and announced that they had overthrown the government. See Ken I. Boodhoo, "Islamic Fundamentalism in the Caribbean," LACC Pub-

security firms in NYC and in Karachi, Pakistan. Their spiritual leader was Pir Sayed Gilani who lives in Pakistan, and arranged training for U.S. Fuqra members in the Pakistan camps of the Kashmiri insurgents; some American Fuqra members actually fought in Kashmir against Indian forces. Intelligence shows that Gilani is connected to Pakistan's ISI and al-Qaeda; the WSJ's Daniel Pearl was on his way to interview Gilani when he was kidnapped.<sup>18</sup>

A number of JF members have fought overseas, including in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Kashmir, Bosnia and Lebanon. Others in the highly secretive group were affiliated with the Kifah Refugee Center, also known as the Brooklyn Jihad Office.<sup>19</sup> One member, Clement Rodney Hampton-El, an African-American Muslim convert, was convicted of plotting to blow up New York City landmarks in 1993. He provided weapons training to fellow members at the Brooklyn Jihad Office, including El Sayyid Nosair who used that training to assassinate Rabbi Meir Kahane in New York in 1990. According to Hampton-El's testimony, he had a meeting at the Saudi Embassy in December 1992 where Jamaican-born, Muslim scholar Bilal Phillips gave him the names of U.S. servicemen ready to finish their tours of duty. He was to recruit the men as volunteer mujahidin and paramilitary trainers for an Usama bin Ladin-sponsored insurgency in Bosnia.<sup>20</sup>

Bilal Phillips provides more material linkages between these African-American Muslims (typically converts) and militant Salafism. Phillips' biography on his website reads, "Bilal, who had read Malcolm X's autobiography, visited one of the temples of the Black Muslims. Though impressed by their organization and the fact that their women dressed modestly, he found their ideology useless."<sup>21</sup> He

seems to have turned toward a much more austere form of Islam. There is still much more to be unraveled pertaining to Bilal Phillips and his connections to Salafist clerics in Saudi Arabia and around the Islamic world.

#### Seas of David/Liberty City Seven

A more recent manifestation of non-Salafist militancy is the case of the Seas of David, or Liberty City Seven. On April 16, a jury was hung in the case against the "Liberty City Seven," who were charged with planning an attack on Chicago's Sears Tower following a 2006 FBI raid on their warehouse and temple in Liberty City, a poor suburb of Miami.<sup>22</sup> This was the second trial against the group; the first ended in acquittal for one man while the jury was deadlocked over counts against the other six.

The group had no firearms, no explosives and no links to a terrorist group when they were arrested. Its leader reportedly roamed the neighborhood in a bathrobe,

**“Such movements, however, may serve at times as a gateway to more conservative—sometimes militant—Salafist groups, such as Jama`at al-Fuqara’.”**

toting a wooden walking stick.<sup>23</sup> The Liberty City Seven subscribed to teachings that blended Christianity and Islam; the Seas of David, the obscure organized group of which the seven were members, developed teachings partially derived from those of the Moorish Science Temple of America, according to Narseal Batiste, the group's alleged leader.<sup>24</sup>

#### Where They Are Today

Critical for intelligence and law enforcement officials is the ability to distinguish non-violent, pietistic or spiritualist movements from Salafist-inspired ones that advocate or practice militancy. Today, the Five Percent Nation is largely leaderless, with various teachers propagating the beliefs of Clarence 13X and poses no serious terrorist threat, although gang activity and criminality is a concern. The Seas of David will, in all likelihood, dissipate and pose no further threat. Such movements, however, may serve at times as a gateway to more conservative—sometimes militant—Salafist groups, such as Jama`at al-Fuqara'. The Jama`at al-Fuqara'/Muslims of America deserves a more comprehensive treatment, as the group is clearly one of the most glaring domestic terrorism concerns for the United States.

*Christopher Heffelfinger is a researcher and consultant for the Combating Terrorism Center at the United States Military Academy. He contributed to the Militant Ideology Atlas, the CTC Harmony project, and the continuing CTC-FBI education collaborative at West Point. Prior to that, Mr. Heffelfinger edited two volumes on terrorism (Unmasking Terrorism, with forewords by Michael Scheuer and Gen. William Odom), and also served as editor of the weekly Terrorism Focus. He is a fluent Arabic reader and speaker, having spent time in Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Morocco. Mr. Heffelfinger lived in Sana`a, Yemen in 2000, and attended the same language school as John Walker Lindh. He also lived and studied with the Naqshbandi Tariqat, where he studied with native speakers refuting militant Salafist ideology through Islamic source texts.*

18 Personal interview, unnamed retired intelligence official, September 2007.

19 "United States: The Jamaat al-Fuqra Threat," Stratfor.com, June 3, 2005.

20 J.M. Berger, "Al Qaeda Recruited Gulf War Vets in 1992, Effort Linked To Saudi Gov't," Intelwire.com, January 6, 2004.

21 For more information on Bilal Phillips, see his official

website at [www.bilalphilips.com](http://www.bilalphilips.com).

22 Justin Rood and Vic Walter, "Second Terror Mistrial Hurts Bush Administration, Critics Say Hung Jury Leads to Second Mistrial in 'Liberty City Seven' Case," ABC News, April 16, 2008.

23 Ibid.

24 "Indictment: Suspects Wanted to 'Kill All the Devils We Can,'" CNN, June 24, 2006.

## Al-Qa`ida's Medinan Strategy: Targeting Global Energy Infrastructure

By Marisa Uργο and Jack F. Williams

AL-QA`IDA'S LEADERSHIP SEEKS historical and religious authenticity in their manner, clothing, speech and word choice, and even in the tactics they have embraced. Following the loss of their bases in Afghanistan in 2001, much of al-Qa`ida's leadership retreated into the mountainous tribal regions along the Afghan-Pakistan border. Along with this physical migration—for them, reminiscent of the *hijra* (migration) of the Prophet Muhammad—al-Qa`ida's leadership also migrated from a strategy of direct conflict, such as the attacks on the U.S. Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 and New York and Washington in 2001, into a subtle but no less historically authentic campaign of long-term, low-intensity conflict against its enemies. One core characteristic of this strategy is al-Qa`ida's efforts to target global energy infrastructure, especially in Saudi Arabia. An examination of the group's official statements, strategy documents and other sponsored media suggests that al-Qa`ida will continue to sponsor attacks on key energy facilities in a concerted effort of inflicting significant damage to the world economy. In order to do so, al-Qa`ida may be employing tactics of low-intensity conflict inspired and guided by the example of the early Muslim community in Medina.

### A Dramatic Turn

Al-Qa`ida's interest in targeting global energy facilities represents a recent and dramatic change in strategy. In 1996, Usama bin Ladin acknowledged the strategic importance of the energy sector in his "Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places." He cautioned against such attacks, writing: "to protect this (oil) wealth and not to include it in the battle as it is a great Islamic wealth and a large economical power essential for the soon to be established Islamic state, by Allah's Permission and Grace."<sup>1</sup> By March 2003, in consultation with al-Qa`ida's leadership, Bin Ladin was clearly rethinking this strategy of benign neglect. In his "Sermon on the Feast of Sacrifice," he wrote that "America is a great power

possessed of tremendous military might and a wide-ranging economy, but all this is built upon an unstable foundation which can be targeted, with special attention to its obvious weak spots [reliance on oil from the Middle East]."<sup>2</sup> It was not until December 2004, however, that Bin Ladin declared a new strategy on behalf of al-Qa`ida: "There is now a rare and golden opportunity to make America bleed in Iraq, both economically and in terms of human losses and morale...Focus your operations on it [oil production], especially in Iraq and the Gulf area, since this [lack of oil] will cause them to die off [on their own]."<sup>3</sup>

Within the year, al-Qa`ida attempted its first—albeit unsuccessful—large-scale ground attack on a key energy facility in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. Undeterred, in February 2006 al-Qa`ida succeeded in breaching security at the Abqaiq processing facility in Saudi Arabia, but was unsuccessful at interrupting production. Every year since 2006, Saudi security forces have interrupted large-scale, near operational attacks targeting the same energy-related sites, including Ras Tanura. Moreover, in a statement posted on an Islamist website just a few hours after the Abqaiq attack, al-Qa`ida operatives publicly announced the issuance of a religious (legal) ruling, or *fatwa*, as part of the authority and justification for the attack. Entitled "The Laws of Targeting Petroleum-Related Interests and a Review of the Laws Pertaining to the Economic Jihad," the carefully reasoned *fatwa* sought to justify the targeting of petroleum-related interests throughout the world. Though supposedly written in June 2004, the *fatwa* was not publicly available until a February 2006 announcement. It is occasionally shared among participants on jihadist forums. Two recent examples include in late July 2007 and again in March 2008. Although Bin Ladin's December 2004 statement referenced above represented a dramatic tactical change for the group, the reasons for the tactical shift were

unclear at the time. The release of the *fatwa*, however, provided analysts a partial explanation for the dramatic change in strategy.

### Legal Ruling on Targeting Petroleum-Related Interests

Al-Qa`ida's leadership relies on the religious guidance found in numerous *fatawa*. Three in particular, however, stand out in the history of the group because of their associations with key aspects of the group's strategy. The first two of these *fatawa* covered the issues concerning the religious acceptability of specific jihadist tactics: 1. the intentional targeting of women and children<sup>4</sup>; and 2. the use of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>5</sup> The third *fatwa*, related to attacks on petroleum-related interests, was written by Abd al-Aziz bin Rashid al-Anzi, a Salafi-jihadi Saudi thinker, who is described as one of the "main ideologues" of al-Qa`ida's affiliate in Saudi Arabia.<sup>6</sup> The *fatwa* justifies the use of jihadist tools to target energy infrastructure within the rubric of the jurisprudential concept of economic jihad.<sup>7</sup> The importance of the *fatwa* is explained in Bin Rashid's description of the complex jurisreligious problem that such attacks pose:

Some jihadists believe that targeting such wealth is a necessity as oil has harmed Muslims more than it benefited them, whereas other people believe that oil is the nation's fortune and the source of its economy and that it is not appropriate to waste it. Such opposing ideas require a jurisprudence research in order to provide a sound interpretation/reasoning of such [an] important matter.<sup>8</sup>

1 "Bin Laden's Fatwa," PBS Online NewsHour, available at [www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa\\_1996.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1996.html).

2 "Bin Laden's Sermon for the Feast of the Sacrifice," Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch Series #476, March 5, 2003.

3 "Osama Bin Laden: 'Today There is a Conflict between World Heresy Under the Leadership of America on the One Hand and the Islamic Nation with the Mujahideen in its Vanguard on the Other,'" Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch Series #838, December 30, 2004.

4 "A Statement from Qaidat al-Jihad Regarding the Mandates of the Heroes and the Legality of the Operations in New York and Washington," April 2002, available on various jihadist internet forums.

5 "A Treatise on the Legal Status of Using Weapons of Mass Destruction Against Infidels," May 2003, available on various jihadist internet forums.

6 Thomas Hegghammer, "Terrorist Recruitment and Radicalization in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Policy* Winter (2006).

7 For excerpts, see Evan Kohlmann, "Al-Qaida Issues Rules on Attacking Oil Facilities," *GlobalTerrorAlert.com*, March 2, 2006.

8 Translation by Mano Fooladi at the author's request.



Anticipating complaints of “transgression” from mainstream Islamic scholars, the *fatwa* is al-Qa`ida’s preemptive justification for attacks on facilities that produce great wealth for the Arab-Muslim world. It is also written as a religious and legal guide for the group’s ground commanders who may find themselves in a position of leading an attack on energy facilities.

#### Al-Qa`ida’s “Medinan Strategy”

In the *fatwa*, Bin Rashid draws an analogy between the Prophet Muhammad’s “Medinan strategy” of targeting caravan routes as part of the justification for economic jihad against energy facilities. After years of persecution by the ruling (pagan) Qurayshi tribe in Mecca, Muhammad and his companions migrated and settled in Medina in 622 CE. This *hijra* from the persecution of Mecca to the open hospitality of Medina not only begins the Islamic calendar, but also frames an important battle tactic—controlled retreat, retrenchment and low-intensity conflict. From Medina, Muhammad and his followers refined the combat strategy of attacking caravan routes leading out of the city through the use of highly mobile small bands of Muslims in order to secure booty and weaken Mecca. Muhammad recognized that the global trade routes to the Levant and other points west were the economic lifeblood of Mecca. Eight years of such attacks degraded Mecca’s wealth and the ruling Qurayshi’s authority, while at the same time hardened Muhammad’s warriors and swelled the ranks of his followers. When the campaign-hardened Muslims from Medina finally engaged the Meccans in a large-scale battle, the former were much better prepared and won decisively.

Drawing a connection between this “Medinan strategy” and contemporary low-intensity conflict, Pakistani general S.K. Malik, in his book *Quranic Concept of War*, identified the ultimate purpose of the Meccan campaign. “The strategy adopted against the Meccans,” he wrote, “was one of exhaustion through economic strangulation and psychological dislocation.”<sup>9</sup> Malik attempts to reconcile traditional Islamic military tactics found in the Qur’an, sura, and hadith with contemporary military studies.<sup>10</sup> In so

doing, he provides Western analysts insight into a possible methodology on al-Qa`ida’s strategic thinking on the subject of low-intensity conflict. Malik, for example, points out that the “Medinan strategy” relied on two primary tactics: first, the location of the caravan route—in this case, heading northwest along the

### “Energy infrastructure in the Persian Gulf has become the contemporary version of Mecca’s caravan routes.”

Red Sea toward Syria was of “easy striking distance” from their location in Medina; second, these Syrian-bound routes were of high strategic value to the enemy since “the economic life of the [Qurayshi] was almost entirely oriented to their trade with Syria.”<sup>11</sup>

#### A More Righteous Jihad

By drawing the analogy between the “Medinan strategy” and today’s economic jihad against energy facilities, Bin Rashid seeks to lay the theoretical groundwork for al-Qa`ida to practice contemporary economic jihad in a more righteous way, while simultaneously deflecting any criticism that such tactics are *bid’a*, or an innovation without support in the Islamic holy sources. Al-Qa`ida’s leaders may envision their own lives as paralleling the lives of members of the first Muslim community as it coalesced in Medina, and may have decided to return to a state of action more in line with Islamic history as understood by them. Their continued attempts at targeting energy facilities on the Arabian Peninsula could fulfill both tactics described above.

If this is the case, then al-Qa`ida’s own version of the “Medinan strategy” has already been a success. Since its “migration” into the mountain regions along the Afghan-Pakistan border, al-Qa`ida has made remarkable progress consolidating its influence over other militant Salafi-jihadi Islamist groups, at least ideologically. They have had many

near-operational successes, such as their ambitious attempts at Gulf facilities, their attacks in London, and four ongoing low-intensity conflicts: Iraq, Afghanistan-Pakistan, Yemen and Algeria.

If al-Qa`ida sees its attempts at targeting key energy facilities as a righteous act, then they could be interpreting their strategic successes as “grace” from Allah. In the context of al-Qa`ida’s long-term strategy, energy infrastructure in the Persian Gulf has become the contemporary version of Mecca’s caravan routes. The attacks and target selection become historically authentic actions, aligning al-Qa`ida with a well-known tradition of the Prophet and his followers, elevating their relative stature throughout the Salafi-jihadi community. As long as they see some spiritual benefit from attempting such attacks, even if they are regularly tactically unsuccessful, al-Qa`ida will continue to wage contemporary “caravan attacks,” targeting international energy infrastructure.

*Marisa Urgo, MSLS, was senior counter-terrorism and energy security analyst at the U.S. Department of Energy from 2003-2008. She has also held counter-terrorism and management positions at the FBI and Raytheon Company. Her areas of interest include the theological foundations of the Salafi-jihadi movement and its long-term implications for homeland security and foreign policy. Her work in open source intelligence (OSINT) is currently supporting the development of data-mining and analysis applications. She and Jack Williams are co-authoring a book on open source research to be published in early 2009. Ms. Urgo has a blog at [www.makingsenseofjihad.com](http://www.makingsenseofjihad.com).*

*Dr. Jack Williams is a Professor at Georgia State University in the College of Law and Middle East Institute in Atlanta, Georgia, where he teaches Islamic Law, Homeland Security and other related topics. Dr. Williams is also the Robert M. Zinman Scholar in Residence at the American Bankruptcy Institute in Alexandria, Virginia, where he is researching, among other topics, risk in the energy industry and the economic consequences of terrorism. He serves as a consultant to the federal government and the private sector on Salafi-jihadi theory and tactics, the role of culture in threat analysis and risk assessment, infrastructure protection, and counter-terrorism. He has testified before the House and Senate; has addressed the American Petroleum Institute, the National Petrochemical and Refiners Association, the American Chemistry Council, and American Society for Industrial Security; and has authored four books and more than 100 articles and papers.*

9 S.K. Malik, *Quranic Concept of War* (Lahore: Wajidalis, 1979), p. 75.

10 See also S.K. Malik, *Khalid Bin Walid: The General of Islam*, p. 78.

11 Malik, *Quranic Concept of War*, p. 78.

## Iraq's Ho Chi Minh Trail: The Syrian-Iraqi Border Since 2003

By James Denselow

THE PRECISE FRAMEWORK of Iraq's territorial integrity is currently facing both old and new challenges. In the northern Kurdistan Regional Governorate (KRG), problems of sovereign control are characterized by regular and often deadly incursions by the Turkish military in pursuit of PKK fighters. Iraq's borders with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are characterized by new and developing high-tech border security solutions.<sup>1</sup> The Iranian border dispute over the delineation of the Shatt al-Arab waterways resulted in British naval personnel being held captive in May 2007. The main focus of this article, however, is the Syrian-Iraqi border—the source of the majority of foreign fighter transit and therefore one of the driving factors shaping present U.S.-Syrian relations.<sup>2</sup>

### The Syrian Connection

The triangle of Syrian-Iraqi-U.S. relations has proved an ever-changing narrative. It demonstrates Washington's ideological-strategic conundrum in dealing with Syria with respect to its Iraq policy. U.S. policy in Iraq has shifted away from reliance solely on hard power to becoming increasingly varied and pragmatic. Yet the desired nature of such engagement is somewhat disputed, currently consisting as it does of low-level regional conferences and Washington's "green light" to the establishment of improved and more public bilateral ties between the respective states.

Therefore, where does the narrative concerning the Syrian-Iraqi border troubles begin? Arguably, the most obvious trigger was the much debated Coalition Provisional Authority's (CPA) "Order 2," which disbanded the Iraqi security forces, including the 35,000-strong Iraqi border guard that had been

responsible for six international borders. Dr. Mustafa Alani, formerly of the Royal United Services Institute, described this action as having turned Iraq's 2,270 miles of international boundaries into an "open house."<sup>3</sup> The opening of the borders also included the dissolution of trade barriers.<sup>4</sup> The consequences of this, compounded by vagueness over the role and responsibilities of the replacement border force, have affected all of Iraq's borders and its relationships with its neighbors.

The collapse of the Iraqi state in 2003 saw the rapid emergence of a (largely Sunni) insurgency. The insurgency proved a multi-factional entity consisting of a variety of groups: former regime loyalists, disenfranchised Sunni Arab nationalists and the participation of al-Qa'ida-inspired foreign jihadists. The insurgent movement that emerged post-war constituted a largely indigenous force, with foreign elements playing regular—and deadly—cameo appearances as "force multipliers": those carrying out comparatively rare but highly destructive suicide attacks.

How does Syria fit into this? In February 2006, John Negroponte, as director of U.S. National Intelligence, delivered the annual threat assessment to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. His appraisal of the Syrian role was illuminating. He described it as that of a "pivotal—but generally unhelpful—player in a troubled region." The statement echoed that of historian Philip Hitti, who, in 1951, painted Syria as "perhaps the largest small country on the map, microscopic in size but cosmic in influence."<sup>5</sup> Moreover, visiting London in September 2006, Syrian Information Minister Dr. Mohsen Bilal responded to a question as to why the United States should engage Syria by confirming that Syria did indeed have influence "beyond its borders."<sup>6</sup> Other commentators, however, have contrasted a Syrian inability to steer the region with a capability to "thwart the ambitions of others."<sup>7</sup>

3 Personal interview, Dr. Mustafa Alani, March 2006.

4 "Let's All Go to the Yard Sale: Iraq's Economic Liberalization," *Economist*, September 27, 2003.

5 Philip Hitti, *History of Syria, including Lebanon and Palestine* (London: Macmillan, 1951), p. 4.

6 Mohsen Bilal, press conference, London, September 2006.

7 See "Syria and Iran: An Enduring Alliance – 1979 to

Synthesizing these views in order to define a policy approach to Syria suggests the importance of balancing Syria's potential constructive role with its pivotal role as a spoiler. The legacy of the policies of the Bush administration's first-term, however, was the transformation of border securitization, theoretically a

**"Syria has constructed 557 border posts, each spaced between 0.6 and 1.5 miles apart, as imposed by the topographical nature of the terrain."**

functional issue, into a political dispute with the Syrian regime, with little input from either the nascent Iraqi government or its fledgling border guard.

### Fences in the Sand

The Syrian-Iraqi border is 376 miles in length and, despite poor relations between Baghdad and Damascus in the past, has historically been more of a line on a map rather than any physical reality. In terms of population and socio-economics, it is worth emphasizing the general poverty of the borderland area, as well as recognizing the tripartite division in terms of physical and social dynamics:<sup>8</sup>

1. From the Jordanian tri-point to the Euphrates River, the border runs through full desert. It is a sparsely populated and challenging environment, home to small Bedouin settlements, nomadic farming and little else.

2. North of the Euphrates is a more built-up area with villages on and along the border line. Villages such as al-Baguz are examples of settlements whose houses virtually cross the international border line itself. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, this section of the border witnesses the

Present," speech by Dr. Jubin Goodarzi, Chatham House Event, October 2, 2006. Goodarzi is a Middle East analyst and author of *Syria and Iran: Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

8 This information was obtained through participant observation. Living in the region, the author visited all sections of the border at various times between 2005 and 2007.

1 Harry de Quetteville, "Saudis Build 550-mile Fence to Shut Out Iraq," *Daily Telegraph*, September 30, 2006.

2 The paper is based on research carried out in Syria during the past four years that examined the evolution of the geopolitics of this borderland as well as political relations between Damascus, Baghdad and Washington.

highest incidence of illegal trade and border crossings.

3. The northeast corner of Syria, called the Jazira, is characterized both by a history of more organized border control measures on either side as well as by the worst incidence of national poverty. The greater security both at and behind the border itself is linked to internal Syrian concerns with the indigenous Kurdish population and its connections with other Kurdish groups across the borders with Turkey and Iraq.

#### Syrian Border Control Measures

Border security starts with a good, solid strategy along the border itself, reinforced by policing and intelligence-gathering behind it. Syria claims to have made significant progress in tightening security along its frontier since 2005. There are also some glaring negative characteristics of Syria's border security arrangements, which allow the issue of foreign fighters crossing from Syria into Iraq to remain. Syrian adjustments to their border have changed its functionality from a line in the sand to a semi-effective filter to the illicit transfer of people and/or materials.

Syria has constructed 557 border posts, each spaced between 0.6 and 1.5 miles apart, as imposed by the topographical nature of the terrain.<sup>9</sup> Each post is manned by between five and eight soldiers equipped with personal weapons and one fixed heavy weapon.<sup>10</sup> The main weakness of such a personnel-heavy approach is that the Syrians have neither the training nor the equipment to conduct patrols at night, when the largest percentage of illicit transit occurs.

The overall size of the Syrian border security force has hovered around 10,000, mostly troops that were redeployed to the east following the 2005 withdrawal from Lebanon. To put this reinforcement in context, it should be noted that prior to the war, the guard on the Iraq border stood at only 700 men. Furthermore, both British and U.S. officials in Syria have admitted that the Syrians have deployed over time and that a "satisfactory" system of border coverage is in place.<sup>11</sup>

9 Personal interview, Syrian defense official, Damascus, June 2007.

10 Ibid.

11 Personal interviews, Syrian officials, Damascus, August 2006.

The Syrians also constructed a sand berm (earth fence) at a height of between 6-12 feet along large parts of the border in 2005. The rudimentary and temporal nature of the structure, however, has meant that large parts have suffered natural weathering, thereby reducing its effectiveness as a barrier. The berm is easy to traverse by foot and there have been frequent reports of 4x4s also gaining access.<sup>12</sup>

Two of the three official crossing points have been steadily improved, although security concerns at al-Qaim mean continued closure. Al-Yaroubiyeh, in the northeast of the country, and al-Tanf, close to the Jordanian tri-point, have seen steadily increasing flows of both people and goods in both directions. In particular, the need for building materials and other goods in the relatively stable KRG-controlled north has seen a boom in traffic at al-Yaroubiyeh. This is characterized by regular queues of more than 18 miles of lorries backed-up on the Syrian side.<sup>13</sup> In addition, there is a rail service that travels across this border with two trains a day, mainly carrying freight cargo.

The Syrian Ministry of Interior has also introduced a new integrated computer system for all border entry points.<sup>14</sup> This helps to compensate for the fact that Arab nationals are not required to have visas to enter Syria. In October 2005, however, the Ministry of Interior issued a circular informing immigration and security officers that non-permanent resident males between the ages of 18 and 30 could be denied entry under a number of conditions, including traveling alone, student or recent graduate status, residence in a country other than their own, or suspicious travel abroad.<sup>15</sup>

By 2006, according to security officials,<sup>16</sup> Syrian efforts to control the border have resulted in the detention of more than 1,300 "extremists" of different nationalities who were handed over to their country of origin through embassies

and security channels. Seventy non-Syrian nationals remained in Syrian detention and more than 4,000 Syrians attempting to travel to Iraq illegally had been interrogated.

The secretive nature of the Syrian regime means that there has been little follow-up confirming these statistics. The work that has been done to look at the numbers and backgrounds of would-be fighters has pointed to Saudi Arabia as the largest country of origin.<sup>17</sup>

#### Future Developments

Since 2003, the Syrian-Iraqi border has developed into a security filter that has reduced the number of would-be fighters gaining access into Iraq. In February 2008, General David Petraeus revealed that the number of foreign fighters traveling into Iraq to join al-Qa`ida had dropped by 50%. To see further improvements to the level of border security, there would have to be a warming in U.S.-Syrian relations—or at least in EU-Syrian relations—to address both the technological and the political shortcomings in securing the line.

*James Denselow is a writer on Middle East geopolitical and security issues and a board member of the Council for Arab-British Understanding (CAABU). Mr. Denselow earlier completed the masters program in International Boundary Studies at Kings in 2004. Previously, he graduated in Geography from the University of Exeter. He worked as a researcher at Chatham House between 2003 and 2005. Mr. Denselow has visited and worked extensively in the Middle East. He writes regularly for The Guardian and has written articles for The World Today, The Daily Telegraph and The Yorkshire Post. He has appeared on numerous occasions to discuss Middle Eastern issues on the international television and radio media, including BBC World Service, Newsnight, Sky News, ITN and CNN. He is currently working on a book on The Geopolitics of Iraq with Richard Schofield to be published by Hurst in 2008.*

12 Personal interviews, Syrian residents of Jazira area, Damascus, September 2006.

13 Personal observation, June 2007

14 J. Denselow, "From Stone Age to Space Age," *Syria Today*, May 2006.

15 Personal interviews, Syrian officials, Damascus, May 2006.

16 Personal interview, Syrian journalist, Damascus, August 2006.

17 Ian Black, "Saudis Make Up 41% of Foreign Fighters in Iraq," *Guardian*, November 23, 2007.



## Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

April 16, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Two NATO soldiers were killed by an explosion in southern Afghanistan. ISAF did not specify the exact location of the incident. – *AFP, April 16*

April 16, 2008 (PAKISTAN): According to police sources, authorities killed Mullah Ismail, a senior Taliban commander from Afghanistan's Kunar Province. Ismail, who allegedly shot down a U.S. Navy MH-47 Chinook helicopter in 2005, was killed on his way to the North-West Frontier Province. Journalists reported that Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed Ismail's death. – *CBS News, April 16*

April 16, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): Authorities announced that one of the suspects involved in the April 13 bombing in Zamboanga City is Joel Salem, also known as Abu Madja, an Abu Sayyaf Group bomb expert. He has yet to be apprehended. – *Sun Star, April 17*

April 16, 2008 (IRAQ): The U.S. military released to reporters a letter from an al-Qa`ida in Iraq (AQI) operative to Abu Ayyub al-Masri (who is also identified by the alias Abu Hamza al-Muhajir), the head of AQI. The letter states that "we must always leave the enemy in psychological conflict" so that "they can never have stability." The letter offers a number of ways to create insecurity in order to weaken the coalition in Iraq and the Iraqi government. The letter was uncovered during a March 5 raid that left one Abu Safyan dead. – *CNN, April 16*

April 16, 2008 (UNITED STATES): A federal judge declared a mistrial in the case of the "Liberty City Seven," a group of six Florida men arrested in June 2006 and charged with planning to blow up buildings in the United States with the help of al-Qa`ida. It was the second time in the case that the jury had failed to reach a verdict. – *AFP, April 16*

April 17, 2008 (UNITED KINGDOM): A British court found Abu Izzadeen, also known as Omar Brooks, guilty of fundraising for terrorists and inciting terrorism overseas. Izzadeen became well-known in 2006 when he heckled the home secretary at the time, John Reid,

during a speech in East London. He was sentenced to four and a half years. – *Guardian Unlimited, April 17*

April 17, 2008 (IRAQ): More than 50 people were killed after a suicide bomber attacked a funeral of two Sunni members of an Awakening Council in Albu Muhammad, a town 90 miles north of Baghdad. – *AP, April 17*

April 17, 2008 (THAILAND): A bomb killed one soldier in Yala Province. The soldier was part of a unit searching for suspected militants in Muang district. – *Bangkok Post, April 17*

April 17, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber targeted a mosque in Zaranj in Nimroz Province, leaving at least 23 people dead. – *Voice of America, April 17*

April 17, 2008 (SOMALIA): A rocket-propelled grenade fired at an Ethiopian military convoy in Mogadishu left three soldiers dead. – *Garowe Online, April 17*

April 17, 2008 (GLOBAL): A new audio recording of al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri appeared on Islamist web forums, in which al-Zawahiri marked the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. "Where the American invasion stands now, after five years, is failure and defeat," al-Zawahiri said on the 16-minute tape. "If the American forces leave, they will lose everything. And if they stay, they will bleed to death." In addition to discussing Iraq, al-Zawahiri also denounced corruption in Muslim states: "Corruption and stealing have gotten to the point of making people hungry and preventing them from basic food. Making people hungry in Egypt... is a part of the U.S.-Zionist plan, which aims to make Muslims subservient." – *CNN, April 17; AP, April 18*

April 18, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Two Dutch soldiers were killed after a roadside bomb hit their patrol in Uruzgan Province. – *AP, April 19*

April 18, 2008 (THAILAND): Thailand's cabinet will extend emergency rule in Thailand's Muslim-majority southern provinces for another three months beginning April 20. – *AFP, April 17*

April 19, 2008 (SOMALIA): Fighting between Ethiopian troops and Islamic

insurgents in Mogadishu left nine Ethiopian soldiers, seven Islamic militants and a number of civilians dead. The bodies of four of the dead Ethiopian soldiers were dragged through the streets of the capital, according to reports. – *AP, April 19; CNN, April 19*

April 19, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Pakistan's envoy to Afghanistan, Tariq Azizuddin, who went missing in February, is being held captive by Taliban fighters, according to a new video released on al-Arabiya. In the video, Azizuddin explained that "we were on our way to Afghanistan in our official car on February 11 when we were kidnapped in the region of Khyber...by the mujahidin of the Taliban." In exchange for his release, the Taliban is demanding the release of Mullah Obaidullah—a deputy of Mullah Omar who was captured by Pakistani forces in March 2007—along with a number of other militants. – *AFP, April 19; Dawn, April 20*

April 19, 2008 (THAILAND): A Muslim man working for a pro-government militia was shot to death by suspected separatist fighters in Narathiwat Province. – *AFP, April 19*

April 19, 2008 (IRAQ): A new audiotape by al-Qa`ida in Iraq leader Abu Ayyub al-Masri (who is also identified by the alias Abu Hamza al-Muhajir) calls for a new month-long campaign against U.S. troops. The statement says that the mujahidin need to celebrate the fact that U.S. troop deaths have surpassed 4,000. Al-Qa`ida has called the campaign the "Attack of Righteousness." – *Reuters, April 19*

April 19, 2008 (IRAQ): The U.S. military warned that a group of terrorists had entered Baghdad and were planning to carry out suicide attacks in the near future. One of the attacks is expected to target Baghdad's Karkh district. – *UPI, April 19*

April 20, 2008 (THAILAND): Thirteen people were injured after a bomb exploded in Yala Province. The bomb was hidden in a trash can and was detonated remotely via cell phone. – *AFP, April 19*

April 20, 2008 (THAILAND): Militants gunned down two policemen who were guarding a local election polling station outside a mosque in Narathiwat Province. – *AFP, April 19*

April 21, 2008 (SOMALIA): Somali Islamic fighters took control of two towns, Guda and Dinsor, killing an unknown number of Somali government soldiers in the process. – *Reuters, April 21*

April 21, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): The Philippine Marines announced the creation of a new strike force—called the Marine Raiders—that will act as a rapid deployment force for use against terrorists and other groups that target national security. The initial company-sized unit will be based at the Marine Battalion Landing Team 9 in Palawan. – *Manila Standard Today, April 21*

April 21, 2008 (PAKISTAN): The Pakistani government released from prison Sufi Muhammad, a pro-Taliban leader who had sent thousands of men to fight against the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan. Muhammad is the founder of Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi, a group that wants to establish Shari'a law in Pakistan. Sufi Muhammad's son-in-law is the well-known, pro-Taliban cleric Maulana Fazlullah. – *AP, April 21*

April 21, 2008 (IRAQ): Three members of the anti-al-Qa`ida Sons of Iraq group were killed by a female suicide bomber in Ba`quba, Diyala Province. One civilian was also killed. – *AFP, April 21; Los Angeles Times, April 22*

April 22, 2008 (SOMALIA): Somali militias allied with the government retook the town of Guda, which had been overrun by Islamic militants on April 21. – *Reuters, April 22*

April 22, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): The chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines announced that initial DNA tests on a body suspected of being Jemaah Islamiyah operative Dulmatin were inconclusive. More DNA samples will be taken from relatives of Dulmatin in order to establish a conclusive result. The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation is conducting the DNA testing for the Philippines. – *Philippine Inquirer, April 22*

April 22, 2008 (GLOBAL): A new audiotape by al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri appeared on Islamist web forums, in which the leader criticized the Muslim community for failing to support ongoing Islamic insurgencies. "I call upon the Muslim nation to fear Allah's question [at judgment day] about its failure to

support its brothers of the mujahidin, and [urge it] not to withhold men and money, which is the mainstay of a war," al-Zawahiri said. In addition to calling on Muslims to join Islamist insurgencies, he also criticized Hamas for considering a peace deal with Israel. Al-Zawahiri also said that "Lebanon is a Muslim frontline fort. It will have a pivotal role God willing in future battles with the Crusaders and the Jews." – *AFP, April 22*

April 22, 2008 (IRAQ): A truck bomb exploded at a checkpoint near Ramadi, Anbar Province, killing two U.S. Marines and one civilian. It is suspected that al-Qa`ida in Iraq was behind the bombing. – *AP, April 22*

April 22, 2008 (IRAQ): A bomb attached to a car exploded after being inspected by soldiers in Mosul, Ninawa Province, leaving one Iraqi soldier dead. – *Voice of America, April 22*

April 22, 2008 (IRAQ): A female suicide bomber detonated her explosives near a police station in Diyala Province, killing six people, a number of whom were policemen. – *Voice of America, April 22*

April 22, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A group of Taliban fighters attacked a police outpost in Kunar Province. The police managed to defend the outpost, yet five officers were killed in the gunfight. A number of Taliban fighters were also killed. – *CNN, April 23*

April 22, 2008 (NETHERLANDS): Gerard Bouman, the head of the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service, said that the threat of terrorism is growing in the Netherlands. Bouman's concern is based on the Netherlands' decision to extend its involvement in Afghanistan, and the ongoing domestic debate over the role of Islam in Dutch society. – *AP, April 22*

April 23, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber killed two police officers in Gereshk district of Helmand Province. It is believed that the bomber was targeting the police chief, yet was stopped by officers before he could reach his intended target. – *CNN, April 23*

April 23, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives in a crowded market in Spin Boldak, Kandahar Province. The explosion

occurred as the bomber was being chased by police. – *Reuters, April 23*

April 23, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), has reportedly ordered his followers not to attack Pakistani security forces and that failure to heed his order would result in public punishment. The orders, distributed in pamphlets, demanded a cease-fire in Waziristan, Tank, Gomal and Dera Ismail Khan. The statement comes after reports that the Pakistani government is brokering a peace deal with Taliban militants. – *Daily Times, April 24*

April 24, 2008 (THAILAND): Five Buddhist construction workers were killed by suspected Malay-Muslim separatists in Pattani Province. – *Reuters, April 24*

April 25, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): The Philippines withdrew another batch of soldiers from Sulu due to the improving security situation there. This has allowed the Philippines to assign the soldiers to other troubled areas where a larger security presence is needed, such as Mindanao. – *GMANews.tv, April 25*

April 25, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Suspected Taliban militants killed a district census director, along with his driver, in Paktia Province. – *AFP, April 26*

April 25, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): ISAF troops killed 15 Taliban militants in Paktia Province as they were preparing to attack a government compound. – *AFP, April 26*

April 25, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A car bomb exploded outside a police station in Mardan District of the North-West Frontier Province. One police officer and two civilians were killed in the blast. A spokesman for Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan said that the bombing was a response to the death of Taliban commander Hafiz Saidul Haq, who was recently killed by police. – *AP, April 26*

April 26, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): The Taliban has revised their demand that mobile phone operators shut down service from 5 PM to 7 AM. According to a new statement, "As the nights are now shorter and the days longer, the Islamic Emirate...permits the [telephone] companies to operate from 6:30 AM until 7:00 PM in the cities and surrounding

areas.” The Taliban’s original demand was made in February, as they alleged that international forces use mobile phones to track Taliban troop movements. The Taliban then conducted a series of attacks on mobile phone operators, causing some of them to abide by the Taliban decree. – *Reuters, April 26*

April 26, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide car bomber detonated his explosives at an Iraqi army checkpoint in Mosul, Ninawa Province, killing three soldiers. Thirty minutes after the attack, a suicide truck bomber detonated his explosives at a separate Iraqi army checkpoint in Mosul, injuring 15 civilians. – *AP, April 26*

April 26, 2008 (IRAQ): An Iraqi police official told the Kuwaiti news agency KUNA that U.S. forces killed a leading al-Qa`ida commander and three of his lieutenants in an airstrike east of Samarra, Salah al-Din Province. The commander was identified as Muhammad Muzahem al-Harbouni. – *UPI, April 26*

April 27, 2008 (ALGERIA): Algerian newspapers reported that government security forces killed 14 al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb fighters in El Oued and Boumerdes provinces the previous week in two separate operations. – *Reuters, April 27*

April 27, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban militants attacked a military parade in Kabul attended by Afghan President Hamid Karzai. During the attack, Karzai managed to escape unhurt but three people were killed. Since the attack, the Afghan government has claimed that al-Qa`ida was also involved. – *BBC News, April 27; UPI, May 5*

April 27, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban militants engaged an Australian Special Forces military patrol in Uruzgan Province, leaving one soldier dead. According to the chief of Australia’s defense forces, “The commandos were involved in a deliberate assault. They were out in the open and, as they were doing their preparations, they were engaged by the Taliban. There was a heavy exchange of fire.” – *AP, April 28*

April 27, 2008 (IRAQ): A female suicide car bomber targeted an Iraqi security forces checkpoint in eastern Baghdad, killing at least three people. – *CNN, April 27*

April 29, 2008 (IRAQ): A female suicide bomber detonated her explosives at a bus station near the town of Muqdadhiyya, Diyala Province, killing one person. – *Gulf News, April 29*

April 29, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Suspected Taliban militants targeted an opium-eradication team in Nangarhar Province, killing 19 people, 12 of whom were policemen. The attack included a suicide bomber and then a subsequent firefight with small arms and rocket-propelled grenades. – *Voice of America, April 29*

April 30, 2008 (THAILAND): Three police officers were killed after a roadside bomb exploded underneath their vehicle in Pattani Province. – *Reuters, April 30*

April 30, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): A Philippine military offensive in Jolo resulted in the wounding of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) leader Isnilon Hapilon. Hapilon, who has been identified as “the last of two surviving leaders of the Abu Sayyaf who engineered daring kidnapping raids and bombing attacks early in the decade,” was shot in the hand yet managed to flee into the jungle after the confrontation. His son, an ASG fighter, was critically wounded during the offensive. A number of other ASG fighters were killed during the operation. The U.S. government has offered a \$5 million reward for Hapilon’s capture. – *AFP, May 1*

April 30, 2008 (YEMEN): A hand grenade or bomb exploded near the Italian Embassy in Sana`a. The Jund al-Yaman Brigades would later claim credit for the attack. There were no reported injuries. – *CBC News, April 30*

April 30, 2008 (UNITED STATES): Salim Ahmad Hamdan, a Yemeni detainee at Guantanamo Bay who was allegedly one of Usama bin Ladin’s drivers, refused to attend a military commission hearing. He is scheduled to be tried in May. – *Washington Post, April 30*

May 1, 2008 (SOMALIA): The U.S. military killed al-Qa`ida-linked commander Aden Hashi Ayro in an airstrike in Somalia. Ayro was one of the leaders of al-Shabab, an Islamist militant group active in the country. – *AP, May 2*

May 1, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives at an Islamic seminary in Khyber District of the North-West Frontier Province, injuring 30 people. According to a witness report, the bomber, who was approximately 17-years-old, walked into the *madrasa* and then exploded. – *CNN, May 1*

May 1, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A Taliban leader told BBC Urdu that the cease-fire with Pakistan has allowed the Taliban to send fighters into Afghanistan to engage international forces there. – *Daily Times, May 2*

May 1, 2008 (IRAQ): A car bomb exploded in Baghdad as a patrol of U.S. troops was passing by, killing one U.S. soldier and at least nine Iraqis. – *AP, May 2*

May 1, 2008 (IRAQ): At least 31 people were killed after two suicide bombers detonated their explosives at a wedding party in Balad Ruz, Diyala Province. The first bomber was female and was disguised to appear pregnant. The second bomber detonated his explosives as emergency vehicles arrived at the scene. The U.S. military blamed al-Qa`ida in Iraq for the attack. – *Voice of America, May 2; AP, May 2*

May 3, 2008 (YEMEN): The Jund al-Yaman Brigades, an al-Qa`ida-linked group in Yemen, claimed responsibility for the April 30 mortar attack on the Italian Embassy in Sana`a. The statement, which was posted on Islamist web forums, said that the purpose of the attack “was to make the infidels leave the Arabian Peninsula and to avenge all Muslim victims of the worldwide crusader campaign.” – *AHN, May 4*

May 4, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): The Afghan government announced that al-Qa`ida was involved in the April 27 assassination attempt on President Hamid Karzai. The government also announced the arrests of two government employees who were allegedly involved in the operation, one of whom is a weapons expert. – *AFP, May 5*

May 4, 2008 (SOMALIA): Islamist fighters killed at least three Ethiopian soldiers during a firefight in southern Mogadishu. – *AFP, May 4*

May 4, 2008 (THAILAND): A bomb hidden in a garbage can exploded at the annual Red Crescent fair in Narathiwat



Province, injuring 12 civilians. The bomb, which was approximately 1-2 kilograms, was detonated by a digital watch. – *The Nation*, May 5

May 5, 2008 (YEMEN): An appeals court judge in Yemen reduced the prison term of Bashir Muhammad Raweh Numan—a member of the al-Qa`ida-inspired Fatah al-Islam group in Lebanon—from five years in prison to two. Numan was charged by a lower court in February to five years after being found guilty of receiving military training at a Fatah al-Islam camp in Lebanon. He was not, however, charged with fighting against Lebanese troops. – *AP*, May 5

May 5, 2008 (IRAQ): Suspected al-Qa`ida fighters killed 10 Iraqi soldiers at a checkpoint in Diyala Province. – *Reuters*, May 5

May 6, 2008 (IRAQ): Pro-U.S. tribal chief Ibrahim Abdullah al-Mujamai, along with some of his family, was kidnapped by suspected al-Qa`ida operatives in Diyala Province. – *AFP*, May 6

May 6, 2008 (SOMALIA): An Ethiopian government soldier revealed that hundreds of Ethiopian troops have been killed fighting the ongoing Islamist insurgency in Somalia since December 2006. – *AP*, May 6

May 6, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a police checkpoint in Bannu District of the North-West Frontier Province, killing two civilians. – *Reuters*, May 6

May 7, 2008 (IRAQ): The U.S. military revealed that a suicide bomber who blew himself up in Mosul, Ninawa Province, on April 26 was identified as Abdallah Salih al-Ajmi, a Kuwaiti man who was formerly held at Guantanamo Bay. After being returned to Kuwait, al-Ajmi was released and allegedly made his way to Iraq through Syria. – *Washington Post*, May 8

May 7, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Two NATO soldiers were killed after an explosion hit a troop patrol in Sabari district of Khost Province. – *AP*, May 7

May 7, 2008 (SOMALIA): At least 23 people were killed in the village of Garsani after Islamist insurgents attacked an Ethiopian military convoy. At least 13

civilians, eight Ethiopian soldiers and two Islamist fighters were killed in the fighting. The village lies approximately 180 miles north of Mogadishu. – *AFP*, May 8

May 7, 2008 (SOMALIA): A roadside bomb ripped through a military convoy in Baidoa, killing eight Somali government soldiers. – *Reuters*, May 7

May 8, 2008 (UNITED KINGDOM): A British judge ruled that Abu Qatada, an extremist Muslim cleric who has been labeled Usama bin Ladin's "spiritual ambassador in Europe," be freed on bail. According to one press report, "The judge said he agreed that Qatada posed a security risk, but added that it would be overstepping the law to further jail him in the absence of a conviction or trial." Qatada will be subject to 22-hours of house arrest each day. – *UPI*, May 9

May 8, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghan police killed six Taliban fighters in Ghor Province, including a Taliban-appointed provincial governor. – *Voice of America*, May 8

May 8, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide car bomber detonated his explosives near a convoy of foreign troops in Kabul. There were no casualties among the soldiers, but three civilians were wounded. – *AP*, May 8

May 8, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Militants marched into the Jalalabad house of well-known parliamentarian Hazrat Ali, killing his father and taking hostage three women and four children. – *AFP*, May 10

May 8, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Suspected Islamist militants killed a Pakistani soldier near a police station in Kabbal, a town in the Swat Valley of the North-West Frontier Province. – *AP*, May 8

May 9, 2008 (NIGERIA): Nigeria's police chief warned senior security officers that al-Qa`ida may be planning a bombing campaign in the country. "The al-Qa`ida network has planned to send time bombs to Nigeria," Inspector General Mike Okiro told his security team. No more details were released. – *AFP*, May 10

May 9, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani authorities and pro-Taliban militants under the leadership of Maulana Fazlullah declared a cease-fire in the North-West Frontier Province's Swat Valley. The

cease-fire is scheduled to take effect on May 10. – *AP*, May 9

May 9, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide car bomber attempted to ram his vehicle into the Mingora police station in Swat District of the North-West Frontier Province. Police opened fire on the vehicle before it could reach its target, causing the bomber to divert course and explode 35 feet away from the building. – *The News*, May 11

May 9, 2008 (IRAQ): The U.S. military rejected claims by the Iraqi government that Iraqi forces had captured al-Qa`ida in Iraq leader Abu Ayyub al-Masri (who is also identified by the alias Abu Hamza al-Muhajir) on May 8. According to a U.S. military spokesperson, "Neither coalition forces nor Iraqi security forces detained or killed Abu Ayyub al-Masri. This guy [who was captured on May 8] had a similar name." – *AP*, May 9

May 10, 2008 (IRAQ): The Iraqi Army, supported by approximately 10,000 Sunni tribesmen, have begun a major operation against al-Qa`ida in Mosul, Ninawa Province. The operation has been dubbed "Lion's Roar." – *UPI*, May 10

May 10, 2008 (SOMALIA): Islamist fighters ambushed a convoy carrying Somalia's internal affairs minister, Muse Nur Amin, killing at least four government soldiers. Nur Amin managed to escape unhurt. Al-Shabab claimed credit for the operation. – *Garowe Online*, May 10

May 11, 2008 (ALGERIA): Press reports claim that six Algerian soldiers were ambushed and killed by al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb fighters in Medea Province. – *AKI*, May 13

May 11, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A new statement released by al-Qa`ida on an Islamist website claimed that a prominent operative, Abu Sulayman al-`Utaybi, was killed fighting U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan. The statement said that al-`Utaybi was killed along with another member, who was identified as Abu Dujana al-Qahtani. Both men had previously fought in Iraq, and al-`Utaybi was identified as the head of the Islamic State of Iraq's judiciary. They were killed in Paktia Province; the date of their deaths was not provided. – *Reuters*, May 11

May 12, 2008 (IRAQ): The U.S. Air Force dropped eight bombs on an al-Qa`ida

**CTC Sentinel Staff****Editor-in-Chief**

Erich Marquardt  
Senior Editor, CTC

**Editorial Board**

Jarret Brachman, Ph.D.  
Director of Research, CTC

Brian Fishman  
Senior Associate, CTC

Assaf Moghadam, Ph.D.  
Senior Associate, CTC

James Forest, Ph.D.  
Director of Terrorism Studies, CTC

LTC(P) Joseph Felter, Ph.D.  
Director, CTC

COL Cindy R. Jebb, Ph.D.  
Deputy Department Head  
Department of Social Sciences (West Point)

COL Michael J. Meese, Ph.D.  
Department Head  
Department of Social Sciences (West Point)

GEN(R) John P. Abizaid  
Distinguished Chair, CTC

**CONTACT**

Combating Terrorism Center  
U.S. Military Academy  
607 Cullum Road, Lincoln Hall  
West Point, NY 10996  
Phone: (202) 425-8578  
Email: [sentinel@usma.edu](mailto:sentinel@usma.edu)  
Web: [www.ctc.usma.edu/sentinel/](http://www.ctc.usma.edu/sentinel/)

\* For Press Inquiries: (202) 425-8578

**SUPPORT**

The Combating Terrorism Center would like to express its gratitude to its financial supporters, for without their support and shared vision of the Center products like the CTC Sentinel could not be produced. If you are interested in learning more about how to support the Combating Terrorism Center, please visit <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/support/> or call Wayne Richardson at West Point's Association of Graduates at 845-446-1553.

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.

training base south of Baghdad. According to an AP report citing the U.S. military, "the area in the district of Arab Jabour was used to manufacture bombs, stash weapons caches and train and launch sniper attacks at U.S. military convoys." - *AP, May 12*

May 12, 2008 (SUDAN): Hassan al-Turabi, a Sudanese Islamist leader who used to associate with Usama bin Ladin, was arrested in Khartoum on charges of fomenting a rebellion. Authorities released him without charge after 15 hours. - *International Herald Tribune, May 12*

May 12, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): An Afghan government official announced that a number of generals have been suspended from duty and are being questioned about possible involvement in the April 27 assassination attempt on President Hamid Karzai. - *Reuters, May 12*

May 12, 2008 (THAILAND): Suspected Malay-Muslim separatists killed three Muslim men in Pattani Province. - *AFP, May 13*

May 12, 2008 (THAILAND): Suspected Malay-Muslim separatists killed two off-duty soldiers in Narathiwat Province. The soldiers were part of a government-backed militia. - *AFP, May 13*

May 13, 2008 (INDIA): Eight near-simultaneous bomb blasts ripped through crowded markets in Jaipur, Rajasthan State, leaving more than 60 people dead. Home Ministry officials blamed the attack on the Islamist group Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami. - *CNN, May 14; AFP, May 14*

May 13, 2008 (IRAQ): According to a U.S. Central Command spokesperson, the reward for al-Qa`ida in Iraq leader Abu Ayyub al-Masri (who is also identified by the alias Abu Hamza al-Muhajir) has been cut to \$100,000 from \$5 million since his value is "not what it was, say, at this time last year...Our assessment has led us to believe he's not as effective a leader on the battlefield...and because of that he's just not as valuable to us." Additionally, according to an AP report, "Officials said that besides denigrating al-Masri's leadership skills, the reduction could lower his stature among potential informants who might otherwise be frightened to turn in a senior operative." - *AP, May 14*

May 13, 2008 (UNITED STATES): The Pentagon dropped charges against Muhammad al-Qahtani, a Saudi citizen held at Guantanamo Bay, who was accused of being the "20th hijacker" in the September 11, 2001 attacks. - *BBC News, May 13*

May 14, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives at a funeral service in Anbar Province, killing 20 people. - *Los Angeles Times, May 15*

May 14, 2008 (IRAQ): A female suicide bomber detonated her explosives near Iraqi troops south of Baghdad, killing one soldier. The bomber is believed to have been a teenager, and according to press reports it is not clear "whether the girl detonated the explosives attached to her body herself or [if] they were set off remotely." - *Los Angeles Times, May 15; The Times, May 15*

May 14, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A missile strike destroyed a house in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The missiles, which were believed launched by an unmanned U.S. drone aircraft, targeted Taliban operatives. - *Australian Broadcasting Corporation, May 15*

May 15, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Tehrik-i-Taliban leading figure Faqir Muhammad vowed revenge against the United States for the May 14 missile strike on a suspected Taliban compound in Bajaur Agency. The leader warned, "We will avenge it by targeting America." - *AP, May 15*

May 15, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber concealed in a burqa exploded by police vehicles in a crowded market in Farah Province, killing 12 people. It is not clear if the bomber was male or female. - *Toronto Star, May 16*

May 15, 2008 (YEMEN): Al-Qa`ida in the South of the Arabian Peninsula, which is the name for an al-Qa`ida-linked group in Yemen, released an online statement threatening attacks in the Arabian Peninsula against non-Muslim foreigners. The group warned that they "stand absolved from [the rights] of any infidel who has entered the Arabian Peninsula." - *Reuters, May 15*