



COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER AT WEST POINT

# CTC SENTINEL

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## About the CTC Sentinel

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

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# Seven Years After 9/11: More is Not Always Better

By Ambassador Michael Sheehan



**S** EVEN YEARS AFTER the 9/11 attacks, there is good news and bad news. First, the good news: al-Qa`ida has not been able to attack again inside the United States. No one could have possibly predicted this on September 12, 2001, when we looked and felt so vulnerable. In the past seven years, al-Qa`ida has been able to strike the non-Islamic West in only two cities, London and Madrid. Both of these attacks were conducted by local cells with varying levels of connectivity to the central or strategic hub of al-Qa`ida. No matter how you spin it, and even if they attack again on the day this article is published, this is not an impressive record for an organization that looked so powerful on 9/11. It is important to recognize our success in mitigating al-Qa`ida's impact on the world—even in the midst of several years of bad news coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Now for the bad news: intelligence and law enforcement operations have not

completely eliminated the terrorist threat. There remains a small and determined group of killers. They reside both here at home and abroad. They are bent on attacking the United States and our interests, and unfortunately they are not going to go away anytime soon. No matter what leaders we elect or appoint, no matter what policies we develop, this small and determined group will be set on attacking us for at least another 20 years. Yet we must remember that they are not everywhere and they are not all-powerful. They have limitations—personal, organizational and ideological—and they have proven their limits by their inability to attack again in the United States since 9/11.

### Prioritizing our Response

Washington logic would have us believe that we solve problems by creating new agencies and spending tons of taxpayers' money. I disagree. As proven by the good work completed under tight budgets at the New York Police

Department (NYPD), leadership, focus, creativity, and prudent risk-taking are more effective tools in the fight against terrorism than a steady flow of federal taxpayer dollars into already massive bureaucracies.

The most important work in protecting our country since 9/11 has been accomplished with the capacity that was in place when the event happened, not with any of the new capability brought since 9/11. I firmly believe that huge budget increases have not significantly contributed to our post-9/11 security. Of course, over time, these gargantuan

### **“When it comes to al-Qa`ida, our best defense is a good offense.”**

budgets *will* enhance our capability, but the cost-benefit ratio does not compute favorably. The big wins had little to do with new programs. The Central Intelligence Agency’s crowning achievement was the takedown of the Taliban in Afghanistan, conducted only months after 9/11 with the same people and organization that existed before. What made the difference was that the CIA was finally unleashed in Afghanistan and around the world. The same holds true for the Federal Bureau of Investigation: most of the productive work after 9/11 was accomplished within the existing infrastructure, but newly focused on al-Qa`ida and guided by the Patriot Act. Based on my experiences in New York City, I would say that all of the post-9/11 increases in the FBI’s counter-terrorism business could have been supplied from existing resources within the New York office. New missions could easily have been taken from current units by shifting priorities rather than spending more money.

#### **Thinking Smart about our Strategy**

As we assess the future of counter-terrorism policy and programs, it is important to ask ourselves what has worked thus far. Beyond the obvious and important impact of the Afghan takedown, the basic intelligence work by law enforcement and intelligence operatives has made the biggest difference. American police and intelligence agents have been alert to

the threat since 9/11, and it is they who have crushed the cells attempting to strike us again. U.S. intelligence has been successful in identifying potential attackers before they can mount an attack in the West, and U.S. military forces have neutralized their capabilities around the globe. Significantly, I am not aware of any attacks that were intercepted by defensive measures such as detectors, screenings or patrols. Defeating terrorism has been all about finding and crushing the cells—at home and abroad. When it comes to al-Qa`ida, our best defense is a good offense.

The costs of an ideal offensive strategy are relatively small in terms of budgetary allocations. The real issue lies in aversion to the idea of spying at home and in dealing with unsavory intelligence organizations abroad. The challenge is to create innovative and risk-taking programs that operate within the law, have strong oversight, and allow for an occasional failure of execution. If we overly constrain the CIA, FBI, National Security Agency, and other players such as the NYPD, we will find ourselves conducting another 9/11 Commission in a few years, wondering how another catastrophe could have occurred on our shores.

The effectiveness of defensive strategies such as opening up all of our containerized shipping, strangling our petrochemical industries with regulatory requirements, and entrenching ourselves and our government institutions behind barriers must be carefully scrutinized. These defenses are often modern versions of the Maginot Line built by the French after World War I, which was so easily bypassed by the Nazi military machine. Walls around our critical infrastructure will also be easily bypassed if terrorist cells are able to organize a plot and construct a weapon. Getting to a good target is relatively easy; we must stop the terrorists *before* they get to that point. Some targets need to be protected, but we must recognize that not everything can or should be protected; the cost is too prohibitive.

#### **Suggestions for the Next President**

The next president should start off his counter-terrorism effort by asking each agency (primarily the CIA and FBI) to delineate its top layer of activity,

representing at least 10 percent of the budget, that contributes to defending our nation from terrorist threats. Then, like most businesses that have to balance a budget, these agencies should put more resources into the high-value, high-payoff activity, eliminating the low-value, low-payoff activity. Of course, each agency will scream that everything they do is critical and to cut anything would seriously jeopardize our national security, thereby placing the blame for future failure on anyone who dares to challenge a budget increase. That kind of nonsense should not be tolerated. More is not necessarily better.

I remember what Mike O’Neil, who runs the counter-terrorism unit at NYPD, told me: “Commissioner, I’d rather have a handful of quality people and get rid of the deadwood. The deadwood just distracts me and the people trying to get the job done.” During our time together, we worked hard to build the right sized unit, not the biggest unit. Dave Cohen also shrank the Intelligence Division at NYPD in total numbers while creating a new and more creative organization. He accomplished this by eliminating low-value work and focusing the good people he had on the task at hand. Meanwhile, even as the NYPD got smaller overall and new counter-terrorism functions were added, crime rates continued to drop. It bears repeating: more is not always better.

*Ambassador Michael A. Sheehan has had a 30-year career of public service. He has served with distinction as a U.S. Army Special Forces officer, a White House aide for two administrations, as a senior diplomat at the State Department and the United Nations, and finally as the head of counter-terrorism for the NYPD. As the Deputy Commissioner for Counter-Terrorism at NYPD, he helped reshape the NYPD into what is widely regarded as one of the most effective counter-terrorism organizations in the world. His latest book reflects on much of his career in counter-terrorism and is entitled, Crush the Cell: How to Defeat Terrorism without Terrorizing Ourselves. Ambassador Sheehan is a Senior Fellow at the Combating Terrorism Center.*

## From FATA to the NWFP: The Taliban Spread their Grip in Pakistan

By Hassan Abbas

YEARS OF NEGLECT, incompetence in governance and failure to devise an effective policy in the realm of fighting religious extremism has provided an opportunity for the Taliban and other extremist groups to expand their activities and influence in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). Continuing instability in Afghanistan and the progressive loosening of the government's writ in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) has exacerbated the crisis. Pakistan also experienced a prolonged transition from General Pervez Musharraf's rule to a democratic dispensation, and this proved to be a distraction that opened up more avenues for extremist forces to plan and implement their expansionist vision. A weakening of the independent judiciary further diminished the potential of the state as well as society to check the overall deterioration of law and order in the NWFP.

Any effort to stem the tide of extremism in the NWFP first requires a dispassionate analysis of the ground realities. This article attempts to examine such indicators, by explaining how the Taliban have managed to spread their influence from FATA into the NWFP, and will present some ideas on how to reverse extremist trends.

### Emerging Trends in NWFP

There are a number of emerging trends in the NWFP that reveal how the Taliban are increasing their influence.

#### Security Zones

Of the NWFP's 24 districts, the government of Pakistan has declared eight districts as high security zones, which means that Taliban activities are expanding and the chances of terrorist attacks have increased.<sup>1</sup> These districts are Peshawar, Mardan, Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Nowshera, Abbottabad and Tank. Five of these districts (or their frontier regions) border different FATA agencies (Peshawar: Khyber Agency;

Kohat: Orakzai Agency; Bannu: North Waziristan Agency; Dera Ismail Khan: South Waziristan Agency; and Tank: South Waziristan Agency). Clearly, increased disturbances and militancy in FATA is pouring into the neighboring settled districts of the NWFP. Based on historical trends, this development was predictable, and it is surprising why Pakistan did not fortify the defenses of the settled areas earlier. The government cannot claim that it was unaware of this emerging threat as only six districts of the NWFP were declared "normal" for elections on February 18, 2008.<sup>2</sup>

#### Suicide Bombings

A total of 324 blasts in Pakistan, including 28 suicide attacks, during the first eight months of 2008 left more than 619 people dead.<sup>3</sup> A significant number of these attacks occurred in the NWFP and the adjacent FATA area. In 2007, the highest number of suicide attacks targeted the region—of the 56 suicide attacks during 2007, 23 were in FATA and 21 in the NWFP—including unprecedented attacks on mosques and jirga gatherings.<sup>4</sup> Previously, such locations rarely came under attack. For the Taliban, another recent innovation has been its attempt to recruit young girls and women for suicide attacks.<sup>5</sup>

#### Nature of Targets

In comparison to FATA, where Pakistan's security forces face the brunt of attacks from Taliban and other al-Qa`ida-affiliated groups, the types and nature of attacks in the NWFP have a different focus: enforcing an extremist version of religious ideals. For instance, targets included a population welfare office in Swabi,<sup>6</sup> dozens of girls' schools,<sup>7</sup> Swat's Buthgarh Jehanabad historical site containing rocks engraved with Buddha images,<sup>8</sup> women with "immoral

character,"<sup>9</sup> video and music shops, and at times barber shops due to their practice of shaving beards. Among these targets, most instructive perhaps is the regularity of attacks on girls' schools; Taliban and affiliated militant groups

## "Failure to invest in local civilian law enforcement agencies has played a crucial role in the declining capacity of NWFP police."

destroyed 125 girls' schools during the last 10 months in Swat area alone.<sup>10</sup> These incidents cannot fall into the category of retaliatory attacks.

#### Law Enforcement Failure

In many cases, civilians in the NWFP reached out to the police force, but to little benefit. There is a widely held view in the NWFP that the police are either helpless or unwilling to challenge the Taliban's expanding influence.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the Taliban often perform a police role in certain districts (such as in Tank) where they even arrest criminals and parade them through the streets for public display.<sup>12</sup> These moves serve two key purposes for the Taliban: they show people that the Taliban can perform better than the police and hence can govern the area, and they create fear, which has a strong psychological effect on ordinary civilians. Additionally, the Taliban now ask locals in certain settled areas of the NWFP to bring their cases and complaints to Taliban religious courts rather than before the country's civil courts.<sup>13</sup> Failure to invest in local civilian law enforcement agencies has played a crucial role in the declining capacity of NWFP police.

Swat," *Dawn*, September 12, 2007.

9 "Pakistan 'Prostitutes' Beheaded," BBC, September 7, 2008.

10 Akhtar Amin, "Militants Destroyed 125 Girls' Schools in 10 Months," *Daily Times*, August 21, 2008.

11 "Taliban Destroy Three Police Pickets in Charsadda," *Daily Times*, July 12, 2008; Abdul Sami Paracha, "Taliban Besiege Police Station in Hangu: Army Battalion Sent to Evacuate Policemen," *Dawn*, July 10, 2008.

12 Iqbal Khattak, "New Frontier Police Chief Faces Taliban Challenge," *Daily Times*, January 5, 2007.

13 Akhtar Amin, "Taliban Set Up Illegal Courts in FATA, NWFP," *Daily Times*, June 29, 2008.

1 Shakil Sheikh, "Eight NWFP Districts Declared High Security Zones," *The News*, July 29, 2008.

2 Zulfiqar Ali, "Only Six of 24 NWFP Districts 'Normal' for Polls," *Dawn*, February 5, 2008.

3 Javed Aziz Khan, "Pakistan Tops South Asian States in Violence," *The News*, August 30, 2008.

4 Ashfaq Yusufzai, "Challenges 2007-2008: Spate of Suicide Bombings Augur Ill for Pakistan," Inter Press Service, December 24, 2008.

5 Ashfaq Yusufzai, "Pakistan: School Girls Lured to Suicide Bombings," Inter Press Service, July 18, 2008.

6 "Tailor's Shop Blown Up in Bajaur," *Daily Times*, September 7, 2007.

7 Reza Sayah, "Pakistan: Bomb Destroys Girls' School," CNN, July 25, 2008.

8 Hameedullah Khan, "Buddha Images Survive Blasts in

*Open Threats to Government*

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a relatively new formation under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud, now feels empowered to confidently threaten the NWFP government and issue ultimatums.<sup>14</sup> This is happening with more frequency since the success of comparatively progressive political forces in the February 18 elections. It is evident that government “peace” talks offered in April and May of this

## “Sectarianism is not new in Pakistan, but its intensity has increased.”

year made the TTP more aggressive in its demands, and the government now acknowledges this mistake.<sup>15</sup> Rahman Malik, Pakistan’s interior advisor, said publicly that the TTP is “an extension of Al Qaeda” and the two organizations have close ties.<sup>16</sup> There are also strong indicators that installing Sufi Muhammad of Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) in Swat failed to reduce the effectiveness and control of his son-in-law, Maulana Fazlullah, in the Swat area. Only a military operation and the imposition of curfew have placed TNSM cadres on the defensive.

*Sectarianism*

Attacks against Shi`a Muslims have also increased in the NWFP, especially in Dera Ismail Khan.<sup>17</sup> Peshawar is also in the grip of such attacks.<sup>18</sup> In a recent attack in Dera Ismail Khan, a TTP operative murdered a Shi`a man; later, a suicide bomber went to the hospital where the deceased man’s body was taken and blew himself up in the midst of his grieving relatives, killing

approximately 30 people.<sup>19</sup> Sectarianism is not new in Pakistan, but its intensity has increased. Shi`a-Sunni tribal confrontation in Kurram Agency is also having an impact in the NWFP.

**Peshawar: A Brief Case Study**

A brief survey of developments in Peshawar demonstrates the potential and ambitions of extremist forces. Although media assessments that Peshawar, the capital of the NWFP, is facing an imminent takeover by the Taliban are exaggerated,<sup>20</sup> there is no doubt that extremist militias including the Taliban are targeting Peshawar with added zeal and energy. In late August 2008, a girls’ school was bombed in the Badaber area in Peshawar District, which was the first attack of this kind in a provincial metropolis.<sup>21</sup> Secondly, Mangal Bagh, the head of Lashkar-i-Islami, who is essentially a warlord operating in Khyber Agency,<sup>22</sup> is introducing his “projects” in Peshawar District apparently without any hindrance.<sup>23</sup> He is believed to have sympathizers in the security forces due to his anti-Taliban stance, which at best is a political position because his religious ideals are quite similar to those of the Taliban. For instance, he has asked men to grow beards, wear caps and keep their ankles visible (a very conservative Islamic requirement) to avoid beatings. A large number of people have purchased caps to avoid being killed.<sup>24</sup>

Additionally, the small-arms fire that recently targeted the vehicle of the chief U.S. diplomat in the city also indicates the increasing threat to foreigners, especially to Americans. Khyber Agency, which is adjacent to Peshawar and is the supply route for NATO forces in Afghanistan, has also emerged as a new center of Taliban activity, as

19 “DI Khan Blast,” *The News*, August 21, 2008; “Editorial: A Sectarian War,” *The News*, August 23, 2008; “What is Your Name?” *The News*, September 5, 2008.

20 Nick Meo, “Pakistani City of Peshawar Could Fall to Taliban as Fear and Attacks Grow,” *Daily Telegraph*, August 30, 2008.

21 “Militants Blow Up Girls’ School in Peshawar,” *Daily Times*, August 26, 2008.

22 Mangal Bagh has recently relocated to the Landikotal sub-district of Khyber Agency.

23 Dr. Farrukh Saleem, “Emir Mangal Bagh,” *The News*, August 3, 2008.

24 “Editorial: Mangal Bagh Still Rules Khyber,” *Daily Times*, September 1, 2008.

ambushes on convoys have become more frequent.<sup>25</sup>

The new NWFP coalition government led by the Awami National Party (ANP) and the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) appears to understand the consequences of this threat more than the previous government led by an alliance of religious parties, but this realization has not yet translated into action. Nevertheless, an anti-terrorist force of 7,000 men has been raised recently to tackle “Talibanization,” marking a

## “Talibanization can be effectively challenged by religious leaders in the NWFP who can expose the Taliban’s deviant ideology. The question is whether the Pakistani government will (or can) provide security to those who are willing to undertake these challenges.”

good first step.<sup>26</sup> Yet, the people of the province who voted these forces into power over the religious parties expected quicker and more significant action.

**Conclusion**

The prevalent view within Pakistan generally and in the NWFP specifically is that direct U.S. military operations and Pakistani security force action in FATA are a lead cause of Taliban retaliation in the settled areas of Pakistan. Only recently has Pakistan’s political leadership started emphasizing that the growing unrest is a direct problem to Pakistan, and not just to the United States. Training and equipping the Frontier Corps is not a substitute for providing adequate resources to the NWFP police. As a recent RAND study stipulates, effective law enforcement is critical to defeat terrorists.

25 Zahid Hussain, “Taliban ‘Siege’ of Peshawar Threatens Pakistan’s Grip,” *The Times*, June 26, 2008.

26 Zeeshan Haider, “Taliban Bring Vigilante Law to Pakistan’s Peshawar,” Reuters, June 27, 2008.

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

15 Personal interview, senior government representative, Ministry of Interior, Islamabad, June 25, 2008.

16 “TTP is an Extension of Al Qaeda: Rehman,” *Daily Times*, September 2, 2008.

17 “Gunmen Kill Shia Leader in DI Khan,” *Daily Times*, August 9, 2008.

18 Javed Aziz Khan, “TNFJ Leader Assassinated in Peshawar,” *The News*, August 17, 2008; “Bomber Hits Pakistan Shia Mosque,” BBC, January 17, 2008.

The nature of Taliban expansion clearly shows that the religious worldview of the Taliban is also instrumental in this matrix and little is being done to counter it. Talibanization can be effectively challenged by religious leaders in the NWFP who can expose the Taliban's deviant ideology. The question is whether the Pakistani government will (or can) provide security to those who are willing to undertake these challenges. Militants cannot be isolated without such measures despite the fact that as a whole they are few in numbers. The warning of Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman, the head of a faction of Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Islam (JUI-F) and a member of the ruling coalition, should be taken seriously when he contends that "it's just a matter of months before news comes that the entire North-West Frontier Province has slipped out of control."<sup>27</sup> Indeed, without immediate remedial measures, what is happening in FATA today may very well be tomorrow's reality in parts of the NWFP.

*Dr. Hassan Abbas is a fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Previously, he served in the administrations of Benazir Bhutto and Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan. He is also the author of Pakistan's Drift into Extremism: Allah, the Army and America's War on Terror.*

## Preparing the Mujahidin: The Taliban's Military Field Manual

By Imtiaz Ali

THE TALIBAN ARE currently engaged in intensifying insurgencies on both sides of the Pakistan and Afghanistan border. To train new recruits and reinforce military lessons in its existing cadres, the Taliban have published the fourth edition of their military field manual, *Nizami Darsoona - Da Mujahideeno Da Agbdad La para'* (Military Teachings for the Preparation of Mujahidin).<sup>1</sup> The 158-page hard copy book is written in Pashtu, demonstrating that its purpose is primarily to assist Taliban fighters in Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> The detailed manual contains information and diagrams of various small-arms, ammunition, light and heavy weaponry, communication tools and chemical and explosives formulas.

According to Ashraf Ali, a researcher at Peshawar University, the significance of *Military Teachings for the Preparation of Mujahidin* is that it uses simple and convincing language to assist "new jihadist recruits" in military tactics and religious justifications. Furthermore, the book's first edition was released in early 2007, and considering that this is already the fourth edition it "speaks to the volume of its popularity among Taliban fighters."<sup>3</sup> This article will outline key points mentioned in each of the book's 10 chapters.

**Chapter One: Religious Justifications for Jihad**  
Chapter one offers religious justifications for jihad. Utilizing verses from the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, it provides the definition of jihad, in addition to its proper codes and conduct. It emphasizes that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are absolute jihads, and it is an obligatory duty for all Muslims to fight in these two countries against what it calls the foreign and "infidel occupant forces."

1 The author received a copy of the book from a former member of the Taliban who is based in Peshawar. See Figure 1 for a cover image of the manual.

2 Many similar training manuals can be found on Islamist websites, although they are typically in Arabic.

3 Personal interview, Ashraf Ali, Peshawar, August 10, 2008.

The book addresses controversial questions frequently raised by critics regarding jihad. For example, it strongly denounces the notion that only a Muslim ruler is entitled to wage a holy war, arguing that this is not necessary if a Muslim ruler is a puppet of infidel forces; instead, "jihad is a prerequisite for the establishment of an Islamic state." The book instructs Muslims to join groups such as al-Qa`ida and the Taliban to fulfill their religious duty of jihad.

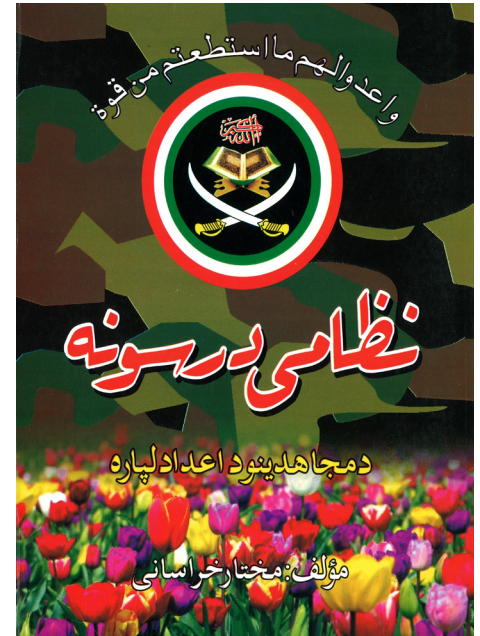


Figure 1. The front cover of the manual.

The document supports the use of suicide attacks, explaining how such martyrdom tactics inflict maximum damage on enemy forces. It answers questions such as whether it is necessary to receive parental permission before participating in jihad, and offers religious justifications behind suicide bombings. Similarly, it strongly supports the killing, and even the beheading, of spies who provide information to the enemy. Much of the information references *al-Zakhayr al-Azzam*, authored by Shaykh `Abdullah `Azzam, the famous jihadist ideologue who is also considered to be Usama bin Ladin's mentor.

### Chapter Two: War Tactics

The second chapter describes the various types of war, such as military, guerrilla, terrorist, spy, propaganda, economic and nuclear. It concentrates on guerrilla and terrorist methods of war since it argues that these are

27 The comment was made in the National Assembly of Pakistan. See Haider, "Taliban Bring Vigilante Law to Pakistan's Peshawar."

most relevant in today's world. For Afghanistan, it emphasizes guerrilla war and instructs readers how to be a competent guerrilla fighter.

It places more importance, however, on a "terrorist war" with the broader objectives of terrorizing the enemy and forcing them to fulfill jihadist demands. A "terrorist holy warrior," according to the documents, must live for a longer period of time among the enemy in locations such as the United States and

**"It places more importance, however, on a 'terrorist war' with the broader objectives of terrorizing the enemy and forcing them to fulfill jihadist demands."**

Europe. Such "warriors" should be able to avoid detection while operating in an enemy state, constantly changing their outward appearance. This type of fighter should be the embodiment of patience and serenity because he may live in one place for a few years without undertaking any military activity. Similarly, he should have full knowledge of his eventual target, and should have a great understanding of the enemy's police and intelligence services.

The book cautions that in a terrorist war, the enemy's front-line military forces should not be targeted. Instead, targets should be the enemy's military, political and economic installations around the world. It offers as evidence of a "terrorist war" the examples of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the 1998 bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya.

#### **Chapters Three to Seven**

Chapter three emphasizes the importance of spycraft and intelligence work in an insurgency and a war. It lays down the criteria for recruiting and utilizing spies, explaining how to properly disguise them in the local population so that they can gather information and intelligence.

Chapter four outlines war strategies, techniques and planning. It provides advice on how and where to set up military training camps. In addition to teaching the techniques of ambushes, camouflage and combat in mountains and deserts, the chapter also instructs its readers how to survive in difficult circumstances and how to escape from a prison in case of arrest or capture.

Chapter five stresses the importance of navigation and maps in wars and insurgencies. It details how to properly develop and comprehend a war map.

Chapter six explicitly outlines various types of weapons, and how and where they should be used. With the help of different diagrams, it explains how to fire various weapons and the proper firing positions to increase accuracy. It provides the weights for a multitude of weapons, their respective target ranges, calibers, and information on explosives.

Chapter seven provides detailed information on various communication tools such as the ICOM IC-V8 and Kenwood TH22 radio transceivers, and Global Positioning System navigation devices. With the help of user-friendly diagrams and pictures, it identifies the different components of communications equipment and their effective use during a war or insurgency.

#### **Chapter Eight: Remote-Controlled Detonations**

Chapter eight provides information on the components needed for remote-controlled detonations. It highlights that the bomb's placement should be visible to the individual responsible for triggering the explosion, and outlines the proper spacing of explosives if more than one bomb is used. It specifies how far the individual tasked with triggering the detonation should be from the bomb; in mountainous areas, the charge should be detonated from a distance of 1-1.5 kilometers, while in flat, plain areas, the distance should be four kilometers.

With the help of diagrams, the book specifies that bridges and parking areas are the best places to blow up the enemy's vehicles. The section also explains the utility of emplacing an explosive near an artificial or natural landmark so that it is easier to time the

detonation with an enemy movement if triggered from a far distance.

Similarly, it also warns of the various failures that can occur preventing a remote-controlled detonation: enemy jamming, faulty batteries, out of range, and improper installation of the bomb or its components.

#### **Chapters Nine and Ten: Explosives**

Chapter nine provides details on primary, secondary and compound explosives, and how they should be employed in bombs and hand grenades. It lists explosive mixtures and details how to create a detonator. It outlines the exact chemical make-up of a homemade bomb, discussing the required amounts of specific chemical agents. Furthermore, it explains how and where to acquire hand grenades,

**"The distribution of the manual attests to the Taliban's growing strength and organizational capabilities. Already in its fourth edition, there is clearly a demand among Taliban cadres for the lessons outlined in the manual."**

such as the F-1, M-46, RGD-5 and RG-42. It also provides details on personal landmines. The chapter outlines the most effective way a hand grenade or mine should be used so that it inflicts the greatest number of casualties on enemy forces. It also differentiates between the different amounts of explosives for attacks on personnel, vehicles, tanks and ships.

Chapter 10 educates its readers on how to produce explosives with chemicals. The chemical instructions are specific, also advising the proper handling techniques when dealing with volatile substances.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The chapter provides extensive details on chemical formulas.

## Conclusion

*Military Teachings for the Preparation of Mujahidin* serves the purpose of preparing a new breed of jihadists by providing them with simple, yet instructive lessons of waging war and engaging in insurgency. The distribution of the manual attests to the Taliban's growing strength and organizational capabilities. Already in its fourth edition, there is clearly a demand among Taliban cadres for the lessons outlined in the manual.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the document is in hard copy format and written in Pashtu, which distinguishes it from other jihadist manuals found on various jihadist internet websites; this signifies that its intended audience are committed fighters operating in Pakistan's Pashtun tribal areas and in Afghanistan. The importance of *Military Teachings for the Preparation of Mujahidin* may have been best described by veteran Pakistani-Pashtun journalist Mukhtar Ahmad Khan, who warned that the manual's continued existence "reveals the frightening revival of the Taliban seven years after their fall by the U.S.-led invasion."<sup>6</sup>

*Imtiaz Ali is a Pakistani journalist working as a special correspondent for the Washington Post, mostly reporting on Taliban and militancy issues in the country's volatile tribal belt and Frontier province. Mr. Ali is currently a Yale World Fellow at the University of Yale.*

## The Current State of Al-Qa`ida in Saudi Arabia

By Michael Knights

ON MAY 12, 2003, the al-Qa`ida Organization in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) launched three simultaneous car bombing attacks on Western compounds in Riyadh, killing 35 civilians and short-circuiting the initiation of a long-planned terrorist campaign within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government responded quickly and fought a tough counter-terrorism campaign throughout 2003 and 2004, reducing violence to a residual level from 2005 onwards. Five years after the 2003 bombings and seven years after the September 11 attacks, the state of AQAP is difficult to judge. On the one hand, the number of major terrorist-initiated attacks in Saudi Arabia has dropped from 30 in 2004 to a combined total of just six in the years since.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, there is a constant trickle of disconcerting indicators from Saudi Arabia. The Ministry of Interior, for example, announced 701 terrorist-related arrests on June 25, 2008, the sequel to other announcements of mass arrests. Various Saudi ministries release a busy stream of alerts to other government departments and major Western businesses in the country, and the diplomatic security community regularly amends its security advice.<sup>2</sup>

What is the true state of AQAP five years after the May 2003 attacks? To scratch the surface of this query, this article draws upon a range of sources within the corporate security community in Saudi Arabia, within the Interior Ministry itself, and within the growing academic community focused on radicalization in the kingdom. These findings suggest that at present Saudi-based AQAP cells appear to be almost exclusively sympathizers, internet propagandists, recruiters and fundraisers focused on foreign jihad.

Saudi Arabia does, however, face a potential threat from terrorists outside the kingdom, primarily from Yemen.

### Recovery of Capability?

Since the collapse of high tempo terrorist activity in Saudi Arabia by the end of 2004, the government has sought to maintain public vigilance and prevent the onset of complacency about the terrorist threat. This has been achieved by developing a series of strong themes in its public communications. The first of these themes is the assertion that AQAP is constantly attempting to recover capability, reconstitute networks and plan and undertake attacks within the kingdom.

One or two major planned attacks have been foiled in Saudi Arabia each year since 2005. The most recent operation to have reached an advanced stage of preparation was the November 2007 plot to undertake an attack on an Eastern Province oil facility by employing an assault team working in concert with a tactical rocket attack using weapons smuggled in from Yemen. The plot was foiled on November 25, 2007, just days before an execution date of November 27-28. The assault group involved seven Saudis and one Iraqi, who the Ministry of Interior stated was the group's leader.<sup>3</sup>

Other major plots exposed in Saudi Arabia since 2005 have demonstrated serious intent but have lacked capability. In April 2007, videos released by the Ministry of Interior after a series of arrests showed small quantities of light weapons instead of the well-stocked caches of AK-47s from 2005 and before. No grenades or pipe bombs were recovered from any of the cells raided in 2007, and explosives in general—homemade or military—have become rare. Ministry of Interior spokesman Major-General Mansur al-Turki admitted that such groups tend to be unrealistic in their targeting intentions and haphazard in their collection of weapons.<sup>4</sup>

1 Also of note is that compared to 38 expatriate deaths in terrorist attacks in 2004, there have been four since.

2 The most recent of which occurred in August 2007, when both the Australian and UK Embassies issued warnings about a raised threat during Ramadan and with the U.S. State Department issuing a remarkably detailed alert about a threat to Westerners in downtown Riyadh in the "14-17 August 2008" period.

3 This information is drawn from personal interviews with government and corporate security analysts working in Saudi Arabia, as well as Saudi Ministry of Interior contacts.

4 "Saudi Counter-Terrorist Arrests," Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Center briefing, May 1, 2007.

5 Personal interview, former member of Taliban, Peshawar, August 2008.

6 Personal interview, Mukhtar Ahmad Khan, Washington, D.C., September 5, 2008. Khan covered the Taliban and military issues in Pakistan's tribal region for more than 10 years.

The cascading series of mass arrests seen in the kingdom and the extreme rarity of terrorist sieges and “last stands” indicates that support operatives rather than true militants make up most of the suspects being detained. This category entails Saudi sympathizers who visit *takfiri*<sup>5</sup> websites and perhaps propagate such materials to friends and relatives. More serious support elements may assist with the production of jihadist videos or provide shelter and succor to militants. Recruitment pipelines for Iraq and other theaters of jihad and fundraising cells also fall into this category. These elements are rarely armed and do not fight to the death when cornered, and their hard drives and phone address books typically implicate many other sympathizers.<sup>6</sup>

These kinds of leaderless, isolated and fragile support networks cannot compare to the long-prepared system of large arms caches and safe houses developed by the first head of AQAP, Yusuf al-`Uyayri, in the 1990s. Although it is always possible that such support cells will morph into attack cells, experience since 2004 has shown that such large networks of inexperienced junior militants tend to be detected and disrupted easily. Post-2003 Saudi Arabia is generally a harder place to build and maintain covert networks.

### The Threat from Outside?

The potential for an “expeditionary” threat projected inside Saudi Arabia by militants based outside the kingdom is a second theme being developed by the Ministry of Interior. Although there is some fear of an attack sponsored by

al-Qa`ida’s core leadership, such an attack would require a local militant community to act as a launch pad. The possibility of “blowback” or “bleed out” from Iraq looms large in this regard. Attacks by Saudi returnees from Iraq—either self-guided or commissioned by

### “Yemen-based militants, on the other hand, present a significant threat to Saudi Arabia.”

some broader network—are considered plausible by Saudi “securocrats” for a number of reasons. First, the Sinjar Records show that Saudis compose the largest single national contingent among al-Qa`ida in Iraq fighters (41% of 606 profiled fighters). Second, the same records also hint that the number of Saudis who traveled to Iraq to be suicide bombers was lower than initially thought (50.3% of the 151 Saudis covered by captured records, which was less than the 56% average across the sample).<sup>7</sup> This means that a larger pool might survive to return.

Perhaps the key driver for this fear is the experience suffered by Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of the collapse of Taliban control in Afghanistan in 2002. The exodus of around 1,000 Saudi militants back to the kingdom transformed the militant threat in a short period of time, witnessing hundreds of hardened Arab-Afghan fighters falling into al-`Uyayri’s terrorist infrastructure as attack or support personnel. Saudi Arabia’s experience in 2002-2004 has probably been formative on the views of Western as well as Saudi counter-terrorism thinking, creating the image of an exodus from Iraq to mirror that of the exodus from Afghanistan. In reality, the rotation of militants between Saudi Arabia and Iraq has been constant, multidirectional and has not had a significant negative effect on security in the kingdom. The majority of Saudi recruits appear to be “mainstream classical jihadists” focused on the “legitimate defensive jihad” against

a perceived U.S. occupier. Were Iraq to decisively collapse as a jihadist theater, it is questionable whether such Saudi recruits—even after in-theater radicalization—would choose to fight in their homeland rather than another iconic theater such as the Afghanistan-Pakistan conflict zone.<sup>8</sup>

Yemen-based militants, on the other hand, present a significant threat to Saudi Arabia. Saudi-born fighters of mixed Yemeni descent have played key roles in al-Qa`ida since the mid-1990s. Usama bin Ladin, whose ancestral homeland is Yemen, recruited extensively from the mixed demographic to boost the representation of Saudi and Yemeni foot soldiers in al-Qa`ida’s ranks. Saudis of Yemeni descent filled all but one of the positions as “muscle” hijackers in the 9/11 attacks and have been highly active on the Arabian Peninsula, using Yemen as a base.<sup>9</sup>

The prospect of establishing bases in Yemen has been mentioned prominently in militant communiqués and in Saudi government statements since 2006. The emergence of the al-Qa`ida-linked Jund al-Yaman Brigades saw Saudi-born militants such as Fawaz al-Rubay`i, Hamza al-Q`uyati and Nayif bin Muhammad al-Qahtani become cell leaders. Literature in *Sada al-Malahim*, a jihadist publication in Yemen, claims the group’s mission is to “expel polytheists out of the Arab Peninsula,” further pointer to the group’s potential focus beyond Yemen. In the March 2008 edition of *Sada al-Malahim*, al-Qahtani explained his reasons for fighting in the Arabian Peninsula rather than Iraq or Afghanistan, calling for Saudi fighters

5 The term *takfiri* in this article refers to Sunni insurgent groups that justify violence against some Muslims and all non-Muslims because their religious beliefs are not compatible with the group. AQAP has become a shorthand way of referring to *takfiri* cells in Saudi Arabia (and Yemen).

6 In 2003-2005, contacts in Saudi Arabia frequently reported gunfire at police checkpoints, and major arrest operations tended to involve gunfire and seizure of major weapons caches. Since 2005, announcements of arrests have not coincided with increased security force presence or movements, and practically no armed stand-offs or weapons seizures have occurred. The last major firefight was the April 6, 2007 raid on the Jidda hiding place of 22-year-old Walid Mutlaq al-Radadi, listed 12 of the 15 Saudi-based terrorist suspects on the 36-strong most wanted list issued by the Saudi government in June 2005.

7 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).

8 Opinion polling in Saudi Arabia has frequently shown fairly strong opposition to the Iraq war alongside very strong opposition to AQAP activities in Saudi Arabia. As analyst Thomas Hegghammer has outlined, Saudis are relatively resistant to any militant movement with a “social revolutionary” grudge against the establishment in the kingdom itself. See “Jihad, Yes, but not Revolution: Explaining the Extraversion of Islamist Violence in Saudi Arabia,” speech given at the conference “The Jihadist Phenomenon: A Social Sciences Perspective” in Menton, France, October 26-28, 2007.

9 More recently, 11 of the 23 militants who escaped from a Yemeni Political Security Organization prison in February 2006 were Saudis of Yemeni descent who were either expelled from Saudi Arabia in the early 1990s or extradited to Yemen from the kingdom after their return from Afghanistan in 2002.



to shelter in Yemen and asserting that the “liberation” of the land of the two holy places “starts from here.”<sup>10</sup>

There are signs that operational coordination between Yemeni- and Saudi-based cells has periodically been achieved, notably the case of the November 2007 attack cell. In that instance, a Yemeni militant associated with Hamza al-Q`uyati used Yemeni smugglers to move rockets into Saudi Arabia.<sup>11</sup> Al-Q`uyati’s group thereafter undertook rocket attacks on an oil facility in Wadi Hadramawt in Yemen on March 29, 2008 as well as a Yemeni Central Security Force base in Sayyun on April 22, 2008. Before his death in an August 11, 2008 raid in Tarim, al-Q`uyati was planning to undertake an attack on a Western expatriate target in Riyadh—the cause of the subsequent August 13, 2008 U.S. State Department warning in Saudi Arabia. Four individuals arrested in Hadramawt were extradited to Saudi Arabia in the days after the rolling up of the al-Q`uyati network.<sup>12</sup>

A final category of potential outsiders to threaten Saudi Arabia in the emerging narrative is the Third Country National (TCN) worker community and Muslims traveling to Saudi Arabia on the annual hajj and minor pilgrimages. On June 25, 2008, the Ministry of Interior highlighted the role of South Asians such as Pakistanis, Afghan Waziris and African economic migrants in recent arrests. Maj. Gen. Mansur described a cell largely composed of Mauritians in their mid-30s studying for religious qualifications whose “concern was to get close to people working in the oil sector in order to find work in oil installations.”<sup>13</sup> Although there is a theoretical threat from TCN communities, Ministry of Interior insiders are candid that many of the foreigners described as “deviants” (terrorists) by the Saudi government in recent years have been economic

migrants with tangential connections to forging, people-smuggling and drugs or weapons-trafficking networks that are also utilized by terrorists.

#### Target: The House of Saud?

A third theme being developed by the Interior Ministry is that the Saudi ruling family and government organizations such as the oil and security sectors are increasingly being targeted by militants. In terms of AQAP targeting strategy, this might be characterized as a transition from the focus on the “far enemy” (Western presence in the country) to the “near enemy” (the “House of Saud” and its religious, security and economic underpinnings). Additionally, by attacking the oil and gas sectors, it allows AQAP to target “far enemy” interests while at the same time striking the “near enemy,” allowing al-Qa`ida to recognize success in both spheres.

In the hydrocarbons sector, Saudi oil continues to be prominently discussed as a target.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, actual plots have been thin on the ground since the February 2006 car bombing attack on the Abqaiq oil processing facility. The June 25, 2008 Interior Ministry announcement noted that the aforementioned African-led Eastern Province cell planned to attack “an oil site and a security target with car bombs.”<sup>15</sup> Yet, the ministry did not adduce any evidence that the cell had actually developed any real capability and there were no indications that any cells captured in 2008 held weapons, let alone explosives. Indeed, while every Saudi Interior Ministry announcement or alert takes care to stress the threat to the oil and gas sector, the only real credible plot since February 2006 was the aforementioned November 2007 rocket and breach plot. Expressing interest in a target is quite different from developing a workable plan and executing it.

A second target highlighted by the Ministry of Interior is the security forces and moderate clerics who are accused of supporting the government’s counter-

radicalization program. Ministry officers have been sporadically targeted for the last decade, with deep-seated feuds developing between security forces and citizens in some areas, such as in ultra-conservative Burayda. More recently, leading jihadist ideologue Abu Yahya al-Libi has been more aggressive in criticizing Saudi Arabia’s security establishment for betraying various

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Islamist causes, describing the Saudi services as “the villainous troops of the tyrants of al-Sauds.”<sup>16</sup> The Saudi government’s active use of clerics to undermine jihadist recruitment in Saudi Arabia has also drawn the scorn of jihadist ideologues, and appears to have prompted plans to intimidate or liquidate pro-government clerics. In April 2007, for instance, the Ministry of Interior announced the arrests of 22 individuals involved in plotting the assassination of pro-government clerics and senior security force officers.<sup>17</sup>

Likewise, in the June 2008 announcement, the Interior Ministry alluded to a “plot” to target security forces, which related to a planned attack on the Khafji Muhabith (General Security Service) offices.<sup>18</sup> All these activities are energetically publicized by the government, which derives useful propaganda from the

<sup>16</sup> Michael Scheuer, “Abu Yahya al-Libi: Al-Qaeda’s Theoretical Enforcer – Part One,” *Terrorism Focus* 4:27 (2007).

<sup>17</sup> These individuals were detained in a range of Saudi cities, including Riyadh, the Eastern Province tri-city area and Jidda.

<sup>18</sup> Personal interview, Saudi Ministry of Interior contact, July 2008. The June 2008 statement also claimed that multiple disrupted cells may have been influenced by Abu Bakr Naji’s book, *The Management of Savagery*, which recommends the weakening of target states through attacks on economic infrastructure and government forces to create failed states or even failed cities or provinces that al-Qa`ida affiliates can more easily dominate.

<sup>10</sup> *Sada al-Malahim*, March 3, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Personal interview, Saudi Ministry of Interior contact, March 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Other indicators included the May 12, 2008 alert on the Saudi-Yemeni border, when around a dozen suspected militants were sought related to a potential plot to strike a west coast Saudi target on the fifth anniversary of the May 2003 attacks.

<sup>13</sup> Samir al-Saadi, “Terrorist Groups Destabilizing Saudi Arabia,” *Arab News*, June 26, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Discussions occurred in Abeer al-Bassam’s “Bin Laden and the Oil Weapon” (in the February 8, 2007 issue of *Sawt al-Jibad*) to new discussions in the January and March 2008 issues of *Sada al-Malahim*.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Saadi, “Terrorist Groups Destabilizing Saudi Arabia.”

portrayal of AQAP fighters as anti-establishment “social revolutionaries.”

#### Outlook for AQAP in Saudi Arabia

There is no doubt that the Saudi government now publicly exaggerates the scale of the known militant problem in Saudi Arabia to stave off a return of complacency. This is a stark contrast to the 2003-2006 period, when the government was still actively trying to downplay the extent of the threat as it rooted out truly dangerous networks. The number of counter-terrorist arrests is frequently massaged; for instance, the 701 arrests announced in June 2008 included arrests previously announced by the Ministry of Interior in November 2007 and March 2008. The number of arrests in the first half of 2008 was approximately 450, with a proportion released. Likewise, the ministry occasionally repackages old “most wanted” lists from 2005 to give the impression that they are new lists of Iraq returnees active in the kingdom.<sup>19</sup> Support cells that have undertaken any form of target identification, however rudimentary, are often portrayed as attack cells, despite a lack of weaponry and a lack of resistance when called to surrender. The ministry is erring on the side of caution, perhaps understandably so.

In reality, it would appear unlikely that a strong AQAP network will emerge again to rival the infrastructure laid down by Yusuf al-`Uyayri in the 1990s. Saudi-based cells are isolated, and the little communication existing between cells—chat room discussions or the sharing of documents and videos—represents a critical vulnerability and the frequent cause of cascading patterns of arrests. The overwhelming impression of AQAP remains that of a destitute movement, as conveyed in the April 2007 issue of *Sawt al-Jihad*, where the editor notes: “None of the jihadi fronts were deserted as much as the jihadi front in the Arabian Peninsula.”<sup>20</sup> Saudi-based cells appear to be almost exclusively sympathizers, internet propagandists, recruiters and fundraisers focused on foreign jihad.

Of the various narratives put forward by the Saudi government, the most convincing is the assertion that Saudi Arabia faces a credible terrorist threat from outside the kingdom, albeit probably from Yemen rather than from Iraq or Afghanistan. The latter two theaters of jihad attract a certain type of Saudi militant, a volunteer who chose to fight outside Saudi Arabia rather than at home, and there are strong reasons to believe that such militants will continue to patronize iconic theaters of foreign jihad in the future. The Yemeni-based militants are another matter; they have chosen to fight in the Arabian Peninsula in preference to other theaters and they frequently have a historic connection to Saudi Arabia.

Indeed, Saudi and Yemeni terrorist cells already share a strong co-dynamic relationship; it is notable that the attack on Abqaiq in February 2006 was mimicked closely by the September 2006 car bombings on Yemeni oil facilities; the Saudi shooting of four Frenchmen outside Medina in February 2007 was likewise mirrored by remote shootings of expatriates in Yemen in January 2008; and indirect fire attacks attempted in Saudi Arabia in November 2007 have become a staple of Yemeni terrorist cells in 2008. The two theaters are thus loosely coupled but the flow may be slowly changing direction. Yemen is already beginning to serve as a launch pad for attacks into Saudi Arabia. Although the gradual whittling down of Yemen’s al-Qa`ida leadership, particularly older Saudi-born militants, will significantly reduce the prospect of future attacks, the possibility exists of attacks on iconic Saudi oil targets or exposed expatriates.

*Dr. Michael Knights is the Gulf security research associate at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He has written extensively on Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) security issues and maintains a broad range of security contacts in the Gulf region.*

## Assessing the Strength of Al-Qa`ida in Yemen

By Gregory D. Johnsen

ON THE EVENING of August 10, 2008, acting on a tip from a local resident, a Yemeni security patrol approached a suspected al-Qa`ida safe house in the eastern city of Tarim.<sup>1</sup> The patrol came under fire, at which point it retreated, called for back-up and established a perimeter around the area in an effort to prevent any of the suspects from escaping. This tenuous stalemate lasted throughout the night. Fighting resumed in the morning, slowly escalating throughout the day. Government forces brought in two tanks, while the al-Qa`ida militants responded with rocket-propelled grenade attacks. Eventually, the militants were able to slip out of their safe house to a neighboring building, but they were unable to escape the security perimeter. By the end of the fighting, five militants, including leading operative Hamza al-Q`uyati, were dead while two more were captured.<sup>2</sup>

The raid was widely seen as a much needed victory for Yemen.<sup>3</sup> Yemen claimed that with al-Q`uyati’s death it had killed the mastermind of a string of terrorist attacks that had plagued the country in recent years. According to the government, al-Q`uyati was behind every major terrorist attack since he and 22 other militants escaped from a Political Security Organization prison in February 2006, beginning with the failed dual suicide attacks in September 2006 and ending, most recently, with the July 25 suicide attack on a military

1 This account of the Tarim shootout has been compiled from statements posted on the jihadist web forum al-Ikhlās, in addition to the following article: “Marib Press is Unparalleled in Publishing Details of the Operation in Tarim, Hadramawt” (Arabic), *Marib Press*, August 11, 2008.

2 In addition to al-Q`uyati, the dead included Abdullah Ali Batis, Hasan Bazar’a, Mubarak bin Hawil al-Nahdi, and Mahmud Baramah. The two captured militants were identified as Ali Muhsin Salih al-Akbari and Muhammad Said Ba`awaydhan. The Yemeni military lost three soldiers. For a good overview, see the excellent reporting of Muhammad al-Ahmadi, “Yemen and al-Qaeda” (Arabic), *al-Ghad*, August 18, 2008.

3 Both the United States and the United Kingdom used the success of the raid as a pretext to relax travel restrictions to the country.

19 These figures and views were derived from close scrutiny of Saudi government announcements and access to translated Interior Ministry warning statements in 2008.

20 *Sawt al-Jihad*, April 2007.

base in Sayyun.<sup>4</sup> The government also claimed that al-Q`uyati was planning further attacks in both Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately, given what is known about this period of al-Qa`ida's operations in Yemen and the local make-up of al-Q`uyati's cell, this is unlikely to be true.<sup>5</sup> Instead, al-Qa`ida, while temporarily weakened, remains a security threat within Yemen.

The September 17 attack on the U.S. Embassy in Sana`a, which left more than a dozen people dead, illustrates this threat. The attack, while shocking, was not necessarily unexpected. Days after al-Q`uyati's death, the Soldiers' Brigades of Yemen posted a statement threatening retaliatory attacks.<sup>6</sup> The proof, the statement said in a common Islamist phrase, "will be in what you see and not what you hear."<sup>7</sup> Then, on September 9, a teaser was posted to al-Ikhlās<sup>8</sup> indicating that the fifth issue of al-Qa`ida's *Sada al-Malahim* journal was due to be released in the coming days.<sup>9</sup> The combination of these two indicators should have triggered warnings in Yemen, as during the past year al-Qa`ida has developed a pattern of linking its attacks to its rhetoric.

#### Successes Reveal Al-Qa`ida's Composition

The September 2006 attacks were most likely planned and organized by Fawaz al-Rabay'i, who was killed by Yemeni security forces in October 2006. Al-Q`uyati, on the other hand, first reappeared publicly this summer in a July 23 videotape released by the "al-Qa`ida Organization of Jihad in the Arabian Peninsula: The Soldiers' Brigades of Yemen."<sup>10</sup> Al-Q`uyati's appearance in the video was the first

4 Ibid.

5 The author dates the "second phase of the war against al-Qaeda in Yemen" to February 2006. For more information, see Gregory D. Johnsen "Securing Yemen's Cooperation in the Second Phase of the War on al-Qa`ida," *CTC Sentinel* 1:1 (2008).

6 Posted on www.al-ekhlaas.net, August 19, 2008.

7 Ibid.

8 Al-Ikhlās is a prominent jihadist web forum located at www.al-ekhlaas.net.

9 The al-Ikhlās website was taken offline, most likely by hackers, before the fifth issue could be posted. As a result, analysts are unable to determine what al-Qa`ida in Yemen is saying in regard to the attack. This makes predicting and analyzing the group's future activities extremely difficult.

10 This group also goes by the name Jund al-Yaman.

crack in the facade of anonymity that had surrounded the organization. While he does appear to have been the mastermind of the July 25 suicide attack in Sayyun,<sup>11</sup> it is unlikely that he was as prolific as government reports suggest. Furthermore, the local nature of al-Q`uyati's cell—five of the individuals, including al-Q`uyati, were from al-Mukalla, while the other two came from the neighboring towns of Shabwa and al-

### **"Yet a closer examination of the evidence suggests that talk of an acrimonious split within the current generation of al-Qa`ida in Yemen may be premature or misleading."**

Qatin<sup>12</sup>—suggests a more limited reach than the government's claim assumes.<sup>13</sup> Part of this verbal overreach is designed to deflect criticism by Western allies, which have grown increasingly strident in publicly questioning Yemen's commitment to the war on al-Qa`ida.

Yemen has further underscored the rhetorical nature of this claim by the moves it made following the August 11 shootout. Almost immediately, Yemen announced that it had arrested a number of al-Qa`ida supporters, and within a week it claimed to have discovered and dismantled a separate terrorist cell in Hadramawt.<sup>14</sup> Days later, following a visit by Muhammad bin Nayif, Saudi Arabia's assistant minister of the interior for security affairs, Yemen announced that it was extraditing eight Saudi militants back to their country of

11 For more information on the attack, see "Yemen's Two al-Qaeda's," *Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor*, August 21, 2008.

12 Al-Q`uyati was born in Saudi Arabia, but his family was originally from al-Mukalla and he seems to have made his way back to his ancestral home after escaping from prison in 2006.

13 In addition to the local make-up of al-Q`uyati's cell which has not been stressed enough, one should also note that the local tip that led to the Tarim raid is a positive development that has been under-reported.

14 Husayn al-Jarabani, "Yemen: The Governor of Hadramawt Discovers a New al-Qaeda Cell" (Arabic), *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 16, 2008.

birth.<sup>15</sup> By the beginning of September, according to most media accounts, Yemen had managed to arrest at least 30 al-Qa`ida suspects since the Tarim raid. On the surface, these appear to be significant victories for Yemen at the expense of al-Qa`ida, but closer examination suggests they are more symbolic than substantive. According to Nasser Arrabyee of *Gulf News*, five of the al-Qa`ida suspects that Yemen arrested in one security sweep "were not hiding, but [rather] they were under lenient house arrest."<sup>16</sup> Likewise, the eight suspects returned to Saudi Arabia do not appear to have been arrested recently, but rather held until their extradition would guarantee maximum benefit.<sup>17</sup>

The narrative of a quick and forceful reaction meets both of Yemen's goals at once. First, it allows Yemen to appear strong and in control of the security situation to its Western allies and foreign businesses, which have been growing increasingly concerned. Second, it suggests that the two militants who Yemen captured in the Tarim raid—Ali Muhsin Salih al-'Akbari and Muhammad Said Ba`awaydhan—have "talked"; the appearance of which, Yemen believes, will turn up the pressure on remaining al-Qa`ida cells, helping to flush them out into the open. Despite these choreographed moves, the Tarim raid and the events that preceded it help to explain much about al-Qa`ida in Yemen. Most notably, it sheds light on the relationship between the "al-Qa`ida Organization in the South of the Arabian Peninsula" and the "al-Qa`ida Organization of Jihad in the Arabian Peninsula: The Soldiers' Brigades of Yemen." These two alternate group identifications had confused many analysts.

#### Theory of a Split Loses Credence

One theory that has gained strength in recent months is that the two groups had split over tactics.<sup>18</sup> This explanation

15 Faysal Mukrim, "Yemen Delivers to Saudi Eight Suspects in Security Issues" (Arabic), *al-Hayat*, August 22, 2008.

16 Nasser Arrabyee, "Five Al Qaeda Suspects Detained in Yemen," *Gulf News*, August 19, 2008.

17 This information was confirmed in personal conversations with Yemeni government officials.

18 This theory has been most forcefully expressed by Nicole Strake of the Gulf Research Centre. See, for example,

held that the original group, which calls itself the “al-Qa`ida Organization in the South of the Arabian Peninsula,” favored a “lie low” strategy that involved building up its internal network and recruiting new members, while the splinter group—the Soldiers’ Brigades of Yemen—was eager to strike immediately. Further strengthening this theory were reports in the Yemeni press of a split between Hamza al-Q`uyati and two of his colleagues, Nasir al-Wahayshi and Qasim al-Raymi, respectively the *amir* and second-in-command of al-Qa`ida in the South of the Arabian Peninsula. Yet a closer examination of the evidence—statements, videos and attacks—suggests that talk of an acrimonious split within the current generation of al-Qa`ida in Yemen may be premature or misleading. The overlap of rhetoric and individuals is strong enough to indicate that the two groups are more like loose cells of the same organization than separate entities altogether.<sup>19</sup>

To fully appreciate this overlap, it is necessary to reexamine the history of al-Qa`ida in Yemen since it was reconstituted following the February 2006 prison break. Of the original 23 escapees, three—Nasir al-Wahayshi, Qasim al-Raymi and Muhammad al-`Umda<sup>20</sup>—are still at large, according to official government statements. This information, however, is contradicted by a fax sent by Yemen’s Ministry of Interior to real estate agents warning them not to rent to any of the 33 at-large militants listed in the fax. Included in this list are al-Wahayshi, al-Raymi, and al-`Umda as well as Ibrahim al-Huwaydi and Jamal al-Badawi, both of whom Yemen has repeatedly claimed were in jail.<sup>21</sup>

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Nicole Strake, “Al-Qaeda in Yemen Divided, but Dangerous,” *The Peninsula*, June 2008.

19 The author would like to thank Thomas Hegghammer for a series of enlightening conversations, which did much to help clarify thinking on this matter. Of course, any mistakes that remain are solely the author’s responsibility. For more details, see “Yemen’s Two al-Qaeda’s,” *Jane’s Terrorism and Security Monitor*, August 21, 2008.

20 Al-`Umda, who is also known by the *kunya* Abu Ghrayb al-Taizi, appears to be the same individual who writes under that pseudonym for *Sada al-Malahim*.

21 The fax, of which the author obtained a copy, is dated May 25, 2008, and in addition to the five names listed above it also includes al-Wahayshi’s brother, Fahd, Nayif al-Qahtani, seven Egyptians and a Jordanian.

The first attacks attempted by a reconstituted al-Qa`ida in Yemen were the failed September 2006 dual suicide bombings on oil and gas facilities in Marib and Hadramawt. Months later, in March 2007, Ali Mahmud Qasaylah, the chief criminal investigator in Marib, was assassinated. This would later be the first attack for which the Soldiers’ Brigades of Yemen would take credit in a statement released in February 2008.<sup>22</sup> For its part, *Sada al-Malahim*, the bi-monthly journal edited by al-Qa`ida in the South of the Arabian Peninsula’s al-Wahayshi, would later eulogize one of the attackers, `Abd al-`Aziz Jaradan, in its second issue, following his death in August 2007. The overlap of individual operatives such as this between the supposed two groups is some of the strongest evidence that the split, if it exists as such, is more a tactical ploy than a divisive rupture within the organization

In late June 2007, Qasim al-Raymi released two statements, one of which was a warning to the government. Within days, these statements were followed by a suicide attack on a convoy of Spanish tourists in Marib on July 2. This attack was also later claimed by the Soldiers’ Brigades of Yemen. It stated that the attack was in retribution for the deaths of five individuals at the hands of Yemeni security forces<sup>23</sup>; one of whom, Yasir al-Hamayqani, was later eulogized in the first issue of *Sada al-Malahim*, which was released in January 2008.

The timing of the attack, following so closely after al-Raymi’s two statements, suggests some level of coordination. Likewise, the identity of the suicide bomber, at least circumstantially, suggests a possible link to al-Raymi. The bomber was identified as Abduh Muhammad Sayyid Ruhayqa, a 21-year-old Yemeni originally from the district of al-Rayma, who was living in the eastern Sana`ani neighborhood of Musayk. Like al-Raymi, whose *kunya* Abu Hurayrah al-Sana`ani reflects his birthplace, Ruhayqa was known by the *kunya* Abu al-Maqdad al-Sana`ani.

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22 Jund al-Iman, “Statement 1,” Soldiers’ Brigades of Yemen, February 24, 2008. The statement misattributed the date of the attack, placing it in April instead of March.

23 Ibid.

His last will and testament, which was posted to al-Ikhlās on March 29, 2008, the anniversary of the assassination of Qasaylah, also provides some clues. In the video, Ruhayqa, who is identified only by his *kunya*, states unequivocally that he is carrying out the attack for the Soldiers’ Brigades of Yemen. He states that the attack is revenge for the death of Fawaz al-Rabya`i and to “expel the infidels from the Arabian Peninsula.” As he continues to deliver his will, however, he mentions both the al-Qa`ida Organization of Jihad in the Country of Yemen and the al-Qa`ida Organization in the South of the Arabian Peninsula. He appears to use the names interchangeably, which could mean that they are synonymous for the members of al-Qa`ida in Yemen. The video definitively demonstrates the existence of the Soldiers’ Brigades of Yemen as early as late June 2007, well before the group first appeared online in February 2008.

In addition to the rationale of revenge, Ruhayqa’s desire to “expel the infidels from the Arabian Peninsula” is a common theme among both al-Wahayshi’s group and the Soldiers’ Brigades of Yemen.

**“Although al-Q`uyati’s death is a significant blow to al-Qa`ida, it did not defeat or even cripple the organization in Yemen.”**

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For the latter, it has appeared at the top of all 13 of the group’s statements, and has consistently been invoked as a reason for carrying out attacks. It has also appeared often in issues of *Sada al-Malahim*. In the first issue it was quoted by Abu Hammam al-Qahtani, who cited it as the most important reason not to travel to Afghanistan or Iraq to fight but rather to stay in Yemen.<sup>24</sup> Abu Hammam is the *kunya* of Nayif Muhammad al-Qahtani, who has been linked by the Yemeni government to the July 2007 suicide attack against tourists in Marib. The hadith commanding Muslims to “expel the infidels from the Arabian

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24 “Interview with One of the Wanted Ones” (Arabic), *Sada al-Malahim*, January-February 2008.

Peninsula” is also cited in the second issue of *Sada al-Malahim* in a statement explaining the group’s thinking. The statement, which opens the journal, says that any infidel entering the Arabian Peninsula is fair game to be attacked or killed, regardless of whether they call themselves a tourist, a diplomat or a journalist.<sup>25</sup>

Al-Qahtani was also linked to al-Q`uyati’s Tarim cell through passports and plans, which were discovered in the safe house following the August 11 raid. Subsequent reports in the Saudi media that al-Qahtani had received funding from individuals in Libya and Iran is a likely distortion by overzealous Yemeni officials.<sup>26</sup> The preponderance of evidence strongly suggests a level of cooperation and even coordination between what some analysts had pegged as two separate groups.

#### Al-Qa`ida Remains Viable Threat in Yemen

Although al-Q`uyati’s death is a significant blow to al-Qa`ida, it did not defeat or even cripple the organization in Yemen. Indeed, eight days after his death the Soldiers’ Brigades of Yemen posted its 13<sup>th</sup> statement to al-Ikhlās. The statement, which threatened attacks in retribution for his death, was posted by the same user in the same manner as the previous 12 statements. This continuity demonstrates that the group’s electronic infrastructure was not destroyed in the Tarim raid. Instead, there are two possible explanations.

In the Soldiers’ Brigades of Yemen’s 13 statements, it has referenced three separate brigades, crediting each with different attacks. These divisions were originally dismissed by most as jihadist hyperbole designed to give an artificially inflated sense of the group’s strength. It is possible, however, that there is some truth in the claims of three different brigades, which would mean that the Tarim raid destroyed one, but left the other two intact. The second likely possibility is that an individual escaped the raid and has continued to post and threaten the government on the internet, while lacking the necessary tools to act.

<sup>25</sup> “Opening,” *Sada al-Malahim*, March-April 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Muhammad al-Malfi, “Abu Hammam al-Qahtani Receives Support from Iranians and Libyans and Invites the Terrorists in the Kingdom to his Refuge on the Yemeni Border” (Arabic), *al-Watan*, August 20, 2008.

A similar occurrence happened in Saudi Arabia in April 2005 when a “bonus issue” of *Sawat al-Jihad* appeared months after most of the organization had been eliminated.<sup>27</sup>

The core of al-Qa`ida’s leadership in Yemen—al-Wahashyi and al-Raymi—remain at large, as do a number of other known militants. While it is difficult to quantify the remaining strength of al-Qa`ida in Yemen in terms of numbers, it does appear that the organization remains capable of carrying out attacks. By far the most worrying indicator is the localized nature of al-Q`uyati’s cell. Of the seven individuals killed or captured in the Tarim raid, only al-Q`uyati was known to security forces. This suggests a diffusion of strength, which should concern Yemen. Already there has been discussion on al-Ikhlās about a new way forward for al-Qa`ida in the aftermath of al-Q`uyati’s death. In one widely circulated letter of advice, a user on the site wrote that what was happening in Yemen reminded him of the fall of al-Qa`ida in Saudi Arabia.<sup>28</sup> To avoid a similar fate in Yemen, he suggested the selective targeting of security officials.<sup>29</sup> What is clear is that despite al-Q`uyati’s death, al-Qa`ida remains a significant security threat in Yemen.

*Gregory D. Johnsen has written for a variety of publications, including The American Interest, The Christian Science Monitor and the Boston Globe. Mr. Johnsen has also advised the U.S. and British governments on issues related to Yemen. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University.*

<sup>27</sup> The author is grateful to Thomas Hegghammer for the reference.

<sup>28</sup> Posted on [www.al-ekhlaas.net](http://www.al-ekhlaas.net), August 19, 2008.

<sup>29</sup> The suggestion was widely reported in the Arabic media. See, for instance, Faysal Mukrim “Al-Qaeda in Yemen is Incited to Target Leader in Security and Intelligence” (Arabic), *al-Hayat*, August 22, 2008. Strangely, Mukrim refers to the letter as an official al-Qa`ida statement, which it is not. It is not clear whether the suggestion of targeting security officials will be adopted by al-Qa`ida.

## The 2008 U.S. Elections and Sunni Insurgent Dynamics in Iraq

By Michael Gabbay

MORE THAN FIVE YEARS after the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq, the current election campaign season in the United States presents an opportunity for Sunni Arabs in Iraq to show the American public their desires for a continued U.S. troop presence. Like American voters, the Sunnis are not of one mind regarding the U.S. presence. Events in Iraq during the U.S. pre-election period, specifically with respect to the level and axes of violence, will help reveal the power balance among different Sunni factions as well as which of the three conflict logics—anti-U.S. insurgency, sectarian civil war, or intra-Sunni factional struggle—is presently the dominant organizing dynamic among Iraq’s Sunni population. Regardless of the results of the upcoming U.S. presidential election, this information can help guide U.S. policy. In particular, the absence of a large increase in violence may signal that the time is ripe for formal negotiations with Sunni nationalist insurgent groups. Overall, the divergent priorities of the nationalist factions combined with the insurgency’s fractious history suggest that continued factional struggles within the Sunni community will be the most likely near-term dynamic.

#### A Nationalist Taxonomy

The signals that will emerge prior to the elections will result from power struggles and interactions between three strains of Sunni nationalists—pro-U.S. accommodationists, anti-U.S. expulsionists and anti-Shi`a revanchists—all of whom, unlike the global jihadists of al-Qa`ida in Iraq (AQI), place value on preserving the integrity of Iraq but have different priorities within that context.

#### *Pro-U.S. Accommodationists*

The pro-U.S. accommodationist strain consists of Sunnis who have accepted the need for a continued U.S. presence in Iraq. Many are former insurgents in U.S.-backed militias known as Awakening (*sabwa*) Councils who have put their hostility toward the United States aside, at least tentatively, and are sincerely willing to give the political

process a chance. Although most would like to see expanded Sunni political and economic power as well as an eventual U.S. withdrawal, they place a priority on Iraqi stability and are willing at present to subordinate these goals for the sake of a less violent Iraq. Abu Azzam, a former leader within the Islamic Army in Iraq (IAI), appears to fit the mold of an insurgent who has been incorporated into the political process; he has expressed support for a continued U.S. presence and formed a political party with the intention of participating in upcoming provincial elections.<sup>1</sup> All *sabwa* councils, however, are not accommodationist, and conversely some active insurgent groups likely fall into the accommodationist category (a possible example is Hamas-Iraq, which broke off from the 1920 Revolution Brigades and is reputedly linked to the largest Sunni party in the country, the Iraqi Islamic Party). The accommodationists clearly have an interest in lowering the level of violence prior to the U.S. elections.

#### *Anti-U.S. Expulsionists*

The highest priority of the expulsionists is the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. The Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS) is the most vocal representative of this trend and is the religious authority for the Jihad and Change Front, a grouping of nationalist insurgents, including the 1920 Revolution Brigades. The value to which the expulsionists assign highest importance is one of Iraqi sovereignty. The expulsionists may have designs on central power, but their strategy unequivocally revolves around defeating the United States in Iraq first. If they had the capability, the pre-election period represents a tremendous opportunity to weaken American commitment via an offensive against U.S. troops. The fact that the AMS has shown signs of reaching out to Shi`a leader Muqtada al-Sadr's political organization does not attest to their strength, however; at his closing speech before the AMS General Congress in Damascus, the leader of the AMS spoke positively about nationalists in the al-Sadr movement, and an AMS

1 Elements within the Iraqi government apparently take a dimmer view of Abu Azzam as he was recently placed on an arrest list. Richard A. Opiel, "Iraq Takes Aim at Leaders of US-Tied Sunni Groups," *New York Times*, August 22, 2008.

aide seemed to dangle the prospect of cooperation if the al-Sadr movement left the political process.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Anti-Shi`a Revanchists*

The anti-Shi`a revanchists are dedicated to the goal of restoring Sunni dominance over Iraq. Although the revanchists do not explicitly state their goal of reimposing Sunni rule, they display a level of hostility toward the Shi`a and adhere to a hard line Sunni Islamism that are irreconcilable with an Iraq where the Shi`a are ascendant. The revanchist calculus regarding violence during the campaign season is unclear. It depends on whether their strategy for attaining central power hinges upon U.S. assistance and on their strength relative to the other Sunni factions.

The Islamic Army in Iraq, which appears to be an amalgam of hard line jihadists and more moderate nationalists, is the most prominent representative of the anti-Shi`a revanchist faction.<sup>3</sup> The IAI's refrain that the "Iranian occupation" is more dangerous than the U.S. occupation is a clever rhetorical formulation that essentially asserts—under the guise of an ostensibly non-sectarian, anti-Iran slogan—the primacy of the Shi`a threat given that it portrays most of the major Shi`a actors as "stooges" of Iran.<sup>4</sup> The IAI has also been widely accused by fellow insurgents of extensive participation in the *sabwa*. Typically, insurgents reserve a special wrath for those who turn against them, as witnessed by the fury that AQI unleashed against the *sabwa*.<sup>5</sup> The fact that the IAI has not retaliated against figures such as Abu Azzam, who have publicly joined the ranks of the accommodationists, indicates that the leadership of the IAI's jihadist wing does not yet see the *sabwa* councils as inimical to its goals. Moreover, in an effort to contain the dissent of its hardliners, the IAI may be trying to cultivate the impression that some of the *sabwa* councils are backing

2 OSC, "Iraq's Al-Dari Addresses AMS General Congress, Says 'Resistance' in Good Shape," July 25, 2008; OSC, "AMS Aide Views Stand on Iraqi Issues, Al-Sadr Trend, Rejects US-Iraq Agreement," August 6, 2008.

3 Michael Gabbay, "Mapping the Factional Structure of the Sunni Insurgency in Iraq," *CTC Sentinel* 1:4 (2008).

4 OSC, "Al-Fursan Magazine Publishes Article on Iranian Occupation of Iraq," February 2, 2008.

5 Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

the Iraqi resistance covertly.<sup>6</sup> The IAI, however, has suffered defections from its hard line jihadist wing as well as the recent departure of its long-time ally, the Mujahidin Army, from both the IAI-led Jihad and Reform Front

**“A continued robust U.S. presence will have a stabilizing effect on sectarian tensions and strengthen the Iraqi security forces in terms of capabilities and as a cross-sectarian institution.”**

and the broader Political Council for the Iraqi Resistance (PCIR). The IAI's participation in the PCIR, which includes Hamas-Iraq and the Islamic Front for Iraqi Resistance (JAMI)—Muslim Brotherhood groups suspected of fighting AQI alongside the United States—aroused intense dissatisfaction from hard line jihadists.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Anti-Shi`a Revanchist Strategies*

The anti-Shi`a revanchists appear to hold the key to the dynamics among the nationalists in the sense that they are free to align with either the accommodationists (and thereby the United States) or with the expulsionists, while still maintaining their core revanchist agenda; the latter two camps, on the other hand, are fundamentally opposed and cannot ally. Accordingly, it is necessary to consider the possible strategies for a Sunni revanche.

Although particular Sunni elites could come to power via a coup, of which Iraq has a fine tradition, such a coup would

6 A purported member of the IAI, Abu Abdullah, said: "Trust me, the *sabwas* are ultimately with the resistance, heart and mind." For details, see Sam Dagher, "In Iraq, Sunni Insurgents Still Aim to Oust U.S., Shiites," *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 10, 2008. The IAI repudiated this article but this denial may have been self-serving as evidenced by the fact that Abu Abdullah's remarks also managed to gratuitously tar the 1920 Revolution Brigades and the Rashidin Army—nationalist rivals of the IAI—as Ba`athist.

7 OSC, "Jihadist Criticizes Islamic Army Political Council with HAMAS-Iraq," October 12, 2007.

not imbue the anti-Shi`a revanchists with the mass power base required to implement the Sunni fundamentalist rule they seek, whereas a military victory over the Shi`a would. One possible strategy would be to first expel the United States from Iraq and then confront the Shi`a in a direct battle. The spokesman of the Mujahidin Army, a Salafist group whose rhetoric is often sharply anti-Shi`a, seemed to hope for this outcome, saying, "I think that the enemy [U.S.] will retreat to bases and push the forces of the sectarian government into the battlefield."<sup>8</sup> This would allow them to align with the expulsionists. The Mujahidin Army's exit from the Jihad and Reform Front may reflect a decision along these lines.

Sunni setbacks in the sectarian violence of 2006-2007, however, have greatly dimmed the prospects of a Sunni victory in an unassisted battle against the Shi`a. On the other hand, the support of the United States would significantly raise the chances of victory. Revanchist leaders, however, are unlikely to be under the illusion that the United States would willingly conspire with them to topple the Iraqi government. Yet, they may believe that they could entrain the United States into siding with them in a civil war if it could be coupled to the intensifying U.S.-Iran conflict; the explicitly religious nature of a renewed Sunni-Shi`a civil war would almost inevitably lead to Iran's backing of the Shi`a side. Faced with the specter of an Iranian client regime prevailing in Baghdad, U.S. support of the Sunnis is not inconceivable if, unlike in 2006-2007, the principal standard bearers on the Sunni side were not the global jihadists of AQI, but rather nationalist groups with aims limited to Iraq. Of course, the resumption of large-scale violence in Iraq would likely hasten a U.S. withdrawal, but a Sunni alliance with the United States during the withdrawal period could prove pivotal to the outcome. The Sunnis, moreover, could offer the additional incentive of not harassing U.S. forces as they withdrew. The odds are against the success of such a strategy vis-à-vis the United States, but it is probably the Sunnis' best scenario for installing an avowedly Sunni Islamist regime in Baghdad.

<sup>8</sup> OSC, "Jihadist Website Posts Interview with Official Spokesman of Al-Mujahidin Army," October 16, 2007.

Although the Islamic Army in Iraq does not exult in violence to the same degree as AQI, it is fully capable of fanning the flames of sectarian warfare. Its recounting of gang-style killings of Shi`a militia members in Baghdad neighborhoods evokes images of bodies dumped in roadside ditches. Furthermore, although car bombings against Shi`a civilians are almost by default attributed to AQI, the IAI has obliquely claimed responsibility for such bombings despite its denials of engaging in this practice. Of particular

**"It seems that, in the absence of blatantly sectarian power grabs by Shi`a actors, continued factional struggles among the Sunnis will be the most likely near-term dynamic, possibly intensifying prior to upcoming Iraqi elections in 2009."**

note is the claim of a joint car bombing with JAMI three days after the declaration of the PCIR—an attempt to placate the IAI's hard line jihadist wing by implying that JAMI shared its core anti-Shi`a orientation and was willing to act accordingly.<sup>9</sup>

This is not to say that the anti-Shi`a revanchists will immediately pursue such an entrainment strategy—they may be more concerned with consolidating their power among Sunnis—but if they wish to do so, time is not on their side.

<sup>9</sup> The IAI claimed that a booby-trapped car was blown up in a "large gathering place" of "apostate criminal militias" in an attack on October 14, 2007 in Adan Square in Baghdad in which 15 "apostates" were killed or wounded. This attack correlates with a number of media accounts of a car bombing against Shi`a civilians in Adan Square producing a similar number of casualties. The claim is remarkable not just for the IAI's virtual admission of attacking civilians, but even more so for the inclusion of JAMI, a group that claims to only target U.S. forces. See OSC, "Islamic Army in Iraq Claims Cooperating With Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi Brigades," October 20, 2007; OSC, "Xinhua: Four Civilians Killed in Baghdad Car Bombing," October, 14, 2007.

A continued robust U.S. presence will have a stabilizing effect on sectarian tensions and strengthen the Iraqi security forces in terms of capabilities and as a cross-sectarian institution.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, there is only so long the revanchists can walk the tightrope of balancing the strategic rationale of aligning with the United States against the principles of their jihadist foot soldiers, many of whom undoubtedly view such a relationship as, quite literally, an unholy alliance. In perhaps a subtle effort to provide some religious justification for such an alliance, buried within an article on the maxims of war as applied by the early Muslims, the IAI relates an incident in which the caliph `Umar allowed Arab Christians to fight alongside Muslim forces against the ruling Persians in Iraq; this stands in contrast to the Qur'anic injunction against taking Jews and Christians as allies more frequently invoked by insurgents.<sup>11</sup> Given that there are factors working against the revanchists over time, the U.S. election campaign period presents an opportunity to weaken the commitment of the American public via a flare-up of sectarian violence.<sup>12</sup>

#### Signs and Significance

The level of violence and its axis prior to the U.S. election day will yield important clues as to the nature of the conflict's organizing dynamics and the balance of power among the Sunnis. The absence of a serious spike in violence would signify that the expulsionists are weak; if they had the capability to mount a sustained campaign against the United States and its accommodationist allies, the pre-election period would be the ideal time. Conversely, a sharp increase in U.S. casualties would imply that the expulsionists are still strong and that the dynamic of an anti-occupation insurgency is very much alive. It would also likely signify an alliance of anti-Shi`a revanchists and expulsionists.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Biddle, Michael E. O'Hanlon, and Kenneth M. Pollack, "How to Leave a Stable Iraq," *Foreign Affairs* 87:5 (2008).

<sup>11</sup> OSC, "Full Translation of 'Principles of War' Article from 12<sup>th</sup> Issue of Al-Fursan Magazine," August 23, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> It is encouraging that an uptick in high-profile attacks against civilians earlier this year did not lead to an escalating spiral of sectarian violence. "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," Department of Defense Report to Congress, June 2008.

An eruption of Sunni-Shi'a violence would imply that the revanchists were ascendant or the possible resurgence of AQI (the proportion of high-profile attacks due to suicide bombings may distinguish between the two); in either case, the logic of a sectarian civil war would be the dominant organizing dynamic of the conflict. A spike in Sunni-Sunni violence (again not characterized by AQI's hallmark suicide bombings) would likely signify a power struggle between expulsionists on one side and accommodationists and revanchists on the other, with Sunni factional dynamics providing the main conflict logic.

In terms of implications for the U.S. presence, any large-scale increase in violence, especially if sustained, would call into question the basis of the surge's success and would likely cause hard thinking about the continued utility of U.S. forces in Iraq. The absence of any spike in violence prior to the election, however, would make untenable the notions that the United States was either aggravating the conflict or powerless to divert the trajectory from an inevitable civil war; it could be said that the revanchists were biding their time, but given the risks of delay that very fact would signal that they have not yet consolidated sufficient power to make their move.

It seems that, in the absence of blatantly sectarian power grabs by Shi'a actors, continued factional struggles among the Sunnis will be the most likely near-term dynamic, possibly intensifying prior to upcoming Iraqi elections in 2009. The Sunni insurgency has had a fractious history of failed attempts at unification, splinter groups, stillborn or riven alliances, and, ultimately, open fighting with AQI, whose membership is overwhelmingly Iraqi Sunni. Perhaps this is a legacy of the Sunnis' long tenure atop Iraq, a rule characterized by rival elites accustomed to jockeying for power rather than organizing cohesively along broad communal lines.<sup>13</sup>

The waning of the AQI threat has brought other rivalries to the fore, both within the insurgency and paralleled outside it. For instance, prominent Anbar *sabwa* shaykhs, who have tussled

with the Iraqi Islamic Party over control of the provincial council and police, claimed that the Iraqi Islamic Party's "very dangerous militia," Hamas-Iraq, has been conducting an assassination campaign against Anbar *sabwa* leaders.<sup>14</sup> To manage intra-Sunni violence, the United States may need to abide particular Sunni armed actors as it in essence did with the *sabwa* councils against AQI. Militias that align with the United States will have powerful advantages over their rivals, as evidenced by AQI's defeats and on the Shi'a side by the recent momentum of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council over the Muqtada al-Sadr movement.

If events in the near-term demonstrate expulsionist weakness and that the revanchists are not powerful enough to strike, then the opportunity and leverage may finally exist for the United States to initiate formal negotiations with major nationalist insurgent groups aimed at getting them to publicly renounce insurgency and recognize the Iraqi government in return for an explicit U.S. peacekeeping aegis. This would replace the current proliferation of ad hoc local truces that allow an ambiguity whereby insurgent groups can play a double game: claiming attacks against U.S. and Iraqi targets—thereby leaving their options open for a return to intensified insurgency and civil war—while their affiliated *sabwa* councils cooperate with the United States to consolidate local power; an ambiguity which gives the Shi'a-dominated government reason to stall integration of the *sabwa* councils into state security forces and perhaps, more aggressively, to prey upon them for sectarian advantage.

*Dr. Michael Gabbay is a research scientist who specializes in the modeling and analysis of the dynamics of social and political networks. He is a Lead Scientist with Information Systems Laboratories, Inc.*

## Learning from Adel Hammouda's Work on Militant Islamist Movements

By Commander Youssef Aboul-Enein, U.S. Navy

SEVEN YEARS AFTER the September 11, 2001 attacks, it remains critically important for Western analysts to study previous works on Islamist movements by Arab writers. There are a number of Arabic-language books that can help provide insight into the thinking of today's Islamist militants. One such author is Adel Hammouda, an Egyptian social commentator, investigative journalist and researcher. More than two decades ago, Hammouda published an Arabic-language book that delved into the Islamist militant trend called the *sabwa* or Islamist re-awakening. The *sabwa* was an attempt to remedy the humiliating defeat of five Arab armies in the aftermath of the 1967 Six Day War through radical Islamist political action. Hammouda traced the evolution of the *sabwa* trend from radical political expression to violent direct action in his book *al-Hijra ila al-'Unf al-Tatarruf al-Dini min Hazimat Yunyu ila Ightiyaal Uktubur* (Migration into the Violence of Religious Extremism from the June Defeat to the October Assassination). Hammouda was prompted to write his book in 1987 due to the failure of Egyptian intellectual voices to speak out against the Islamist militant trend. He was dismayed to find that the best research on Islamist militant groups during the presidency of Anwar al-Sadat were written by Israeli researchers.

Arabic books written about Islamist militants offer a treasure trove of understanding about the adversary on many levels from the tactical to the strategic. It is critical for U.S. strategists to study these books, such as Adel Hammouda's, to find insights from past militant Islamist movements so that they can be applied today.

### Hammouda's Work on Egyptian Militant Islamist Groups

Hammouda's book offers an excellent expose into the militants who attempted to operationalize the theories of Islamist militant ideologue Sayyid

<sup>13</sup> Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> OSC, "Al-Anbar Chieftains Accuse Islamic Party of Bringing Al-Qa'ida to Iraq," April 3, 2008.



Qutb, who is among the most important ideologues of modern Islamist militant theory. Hammouda argued that several militants—including those who plotted Anwar al-Sadat's assassination in 1981—were attempting to put into practice Qutb's theories. Some argue that al-Qa`ida deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri is an outgrowth of Qutb's use of Islam to justify the complete rejection of 20<sup>th</sup> century Muslim society as corrupt, and the need to withdraw from society before forming a vanguard to lead a militant Islamist revolution.

Hammouda used his publication to criticize Egypt's *ulama* (clerical establishment), who thought that issuing written and verbal outrage was enough to counter the direction in which militants were taking Islam, chastising the clergy for not deconstructing Islamist militant ideologies and actions. The book is critical of 1970s senior Egyptian cleric Shaykh `Abd al-`Aziz `Isa for blaming

**“Arabic books written about Islamist militants offer a treasure trove of understanding about the adversary on many levels from the tactical to the strategic.”**

Islamist militancy of the 1970s and 1980s on family upbringing and not the theology of militant Islam. Hammouda argued that militant Islamist theory needed to be refuted using cogent Islamic arguments. At the time, several questions were being asked by the Muslim youth (some of whom would later join al-Qa`ida), such as: is using force or evangelism to propagate the faith legitimate, and what constitutes an Islamic state? According to Hammouda, the clergy—caught between Islamist militants and the state—failed in their basic duty to answer these questions and, instead, ignored them.

**Salah Sirriyya's Attempt to Storm the Military Technical College**

After Qutb was executed in 1966, those who read his Islamist militant political manifesto, *Milestones Along the Road*, extrapolated that in the hierarchy and

sovereignty of man and God (what Qutb called the *hakmiyya*), there must be no competition—God must be absolute. The trappings of a nation-state, a national anthem, honoring Egypt's tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and saluting the flag were all forms of idolatry because they competed for God's glory. Readers thereafter used Qutb and the Pakistani ideologue Abu al-A`la Mawdudi's reference of the secular state competing with God's sovereignty to delegitimize the modern nation-state. Due to Qutb's prolific writings that included not only his political manifesto *Milestones Along the Road*, but books on Islamic economics, Qur'anic commentary and social justice, it is highly probable that had Qutb lived, he would have most likely written manifestos that transformed his militant visions and theory into recommendations for direct action.

Among the first terrorists and Islamist militants to operationalize Qutb was the Palestinian Salah Sirriyya, who led a failed 1974 attempt to storm the Military Technical College in Cairo. Sirriyya's theories can be reduced to the following points:

- Over the centuries, Muslims have consistently failed to act on their beliefs, choosing dialogue instead. This problem is not specific to Palestinians but rather the result of the general malaise of the Arab-Muslim world's failure to act.

- An Islamic state versus a secular nation-state has as its objective the spreading of the Islamic message and its complete application on all spheres of life. All instruments of the state (media, education, foreign policy, economics and military) must be placed in the service of Islam.

- An Islamic state can elicit help from non-Muslims for technical aid, but cannot accept the leadership of non-Muslims.

The book argued that Sirriyya was the first organized expression of Qutb and where the tree of *takfir* (declaring Muslims apostate) began to bloom. Prior to the events of April 1974 and his storming of the Military Technical College, Sirriyya participated in Palestinian rejectionist groups, including being a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Sirriyya arrived in Egypt at an

ideal time for Islamist radicals, between 1971 and 1977. During this time, Anwar al-Sadat used Islamist radical groups as a counter-weight to the Nasirists, leftists and Marxists who were attempting to remove him from power. Al-Sadat attempted to distinguish himself from Gamal `Abd al-Nasir by assuming the title of *Ra'is al-Mu'minin* (President of the Faithful) and cloaking himself in religiosity. The environment in Egypt, and the release of Muslim Brotherhood prisoners jailed by al-Nasir, provided an atmosphere for Sirriyya and others to experiment with staging a coup using Qutbist theory as the basis of an Islamic revolutionary politics. He became disillusioned with Palestinian rejectionist groups and, having left Jordan for Egypt, found refuge in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, where he would meet Muhammad al-Ghazali, Zaynab al-Ghazali, and Supreme Guide Hasan al-Hudaybi. Soon after Sirriyya's death sentence in October 1975, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood disassociated itself from him, and the details of the extent of the links between Sirriyya and the Brotherhood remain murky. Salah Sirriyya's storming of the Military Technical College in 1974 to lead a widespread military coup was ill-conceived and had no chance for success. He did, however, inspire those who were later involved in the successful assassination of Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat. Sirriyya is considered the first person after Qutb's execution in 1966 to attempt to operationalize Qutbist theories.

**Qutb in Practice: Shukri Mustafa's Violent Cult**

Shukri Mustafa entered al-Nasir's prisons in 1965, interrupting his studies in agriculture at the University of Assuit. He was imprisoned for six years for agitating and inciting radical Islamist riots on campus. While in prison, Mustafa joined Jama`at al-Muslimin (GM).<sup>1</sup> GM was established by an imprisoned Azhar seminarian, `Ali `Abduh Isma`il, as an Islamic enclave in prison used to perfect an Islamic lifestyle among inmates and to establish the initial steps necessary in establishing an Islamic state. Hammouda detailed how this prison group tore itself apart

<sup>1</sup> The group's title is often transliterated as Gamaa al-Muslimin. The group is not to be confused with the better known and organized Jama`at al-Islamiya.

by what is described as a *takfir* war with other prison groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, and prison authorities. Among GM's tactics were to declare whole swathes of prison inmates and authorities apostate. This became so disruptive that the supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hasan al-Hudaybi, was brought in to rationalize with the GM. Al-Hudaybi would later pen a critique of *takfir*, entitled *Du`a laa Quda'* (Evangelicals and Not Judges). The seminar of GM ceased his activities, depriving Mustafa of his only source of empowerment in prison. He would withdraw into himself until his release in 1971, formulating what would become his cult, known as al-Takfir wa'l-Hijra (Anathematization and Emigration).

Mustafa's extended imprisonment from 1965 to 1971 found him recreating a society modeled on the Islamist prison group GM. By 1976, al-Takfir wa'l-Hijra had 5,000 members ranging in age from 14 to 70. In 1973, Shukri Mustafa linked up and merged with remnants of Salah Sirriyya's group, taking all of his followers to the mountains of Assuit to begin the creation of a perfect Islamic society. In 1975, Egyptians in the Assuit region became alarmed when young women disappeared and were presumed kidnapped. This was followed by disappearances of wives, husbands and students. These individuals had been enticed to join Shukri Mustafa's cult. Mustafa would claim to Egyptian authorities and court officials that he was the caliph of God on Earth. Members had to sell their worldly goods to join the group. Mustafa authorized only certain followers to trade for the group, who he established as street vendors selling produce and handcrafted goods in Alexandria. Mustafa also utilized child labor and sent cult members to Persian Gulf countries to send back remittances. Women worked in a collective and had to render Mustafa blind obedience. Mustafa also imposed a plethora of forbidden and permissible items. All aspects from the *jabiliyya* society<sup>2</sup>—schools, mosques, food subsidies and clothes—provided by the government were prohibited.

<sup>2</sup> *Jabiliyya* society was a Qutbist perversion of how the Prophet Muhammad described aspects of Meccan society such as infanticide.

On July 3, 1977, Mustafa's cult abducted at gunpoint a popular cleric and former religious minister, Shaykh Muhammad al-Dahabi. Mustafa's cult took responsibility for the kidnapping and issued several demands, chiefly the release of Mustafa's followers

### **“Mustafa's appeal was his ability to create an alternative society with a spiritual focus that enticed thousands.”**

in Egyptian jails; pardon for those sentenced to prison; and an investigation into the abuses perpetrated by Egypt's internal security apparatus. There are a variety of reasons why Shukri Mustafa's group targeted al-Dahabi, and some of them can be explained by looking at al-Dahabi's views on radical groups. Some of his views are outlined below:

- Some youth feel that social ills can be solved by force or by withdrawing from society. These youth have to be provided a relentless exposure to the reality of Islam, which rejects the path of extremes, ignorance and deception.

- Islam can propagate a rational and calm form of *da`wa* (evangelism).

- Islamic law must accommodate and serve the needs of the social problems of the age.

- Islam must be purified from fantasies, ignorance and pseudo-intellectualism. Regrettably, the voices of fantasy are louder than the voices of truth.

- Mosques need to be places that do more than serve as a prayer hall for the masses, but as a life-long school to explore Islamic thought and intellectualism.

- The imam must reach out to the youth and engage them in constructive dialogue to steer them away from radicalism through alternative Islamic arguments.

- Egyptians should not focus on just detaining youth, but offer alternative and constructive Islamic thought.

Al-Dahabi's views contradicted Qutbist militant thought, making him a target of Shukri Mustafa. The Egyptian government responded to al-Dahabi's kidnapping by conducting mass arrests of cult members. Shukri Mustafa himself was finally apprehended at a Cairo apartment. Al-Dahabi's murdered body, however, was found in an apartment in Giza near the pyramids. The government dismantled the group, and in 1978 three of its main leaders were sentenced to death, including Shukri Mustafa. Mustafa's appeal was his ability to create an alternative society with a spiritual focus that enticed thousands.

Al-Dahabi's words should be assessed today to confront the current ideological war. Islamist radicals murdered him for his ideas because he directly challenged Qutbist militant thought. American strategists must now immerse themselves in what the United States once considered obscure and unknown criminal cases since they provide insights in waging the long war on terrorism. Arabic books provide a unique and in-depth perspective that cannot be ignored as America's future military leaders are educated.

*Commander Youssef Aboul-Enein is considered an important thinker on militant Islamist ideology at the Department of Defense and is a frequent contributor to the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. He currently serves as a Defense Department Counter-Terrorism Analyst. CDR Aboul-Enein wishes to thank the John T. Hughes and Brandeis University Libraries for making this work available for study. He also wishes to express appreciation to his colleague Mr. Gregory Elder for his edits and commentary that have enhanced this expose.*

## After Action Report: Working with the Awakening in Central Anbar

By Captain Elliot Press, U.S. Army

AS A STATUS of Forces Agreement between the United States and Iraq nears, discussions are heightening about the withdrawal of coalition forces.<sup>1</sup> One area in Iraq where the United States has withdrawn a large number of troops is Anbar Province, the strategically vital area bordering Baghdad in the east and three countries—Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia—in the west.<sup>2</sup> My unit, the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division (1-3 BCT) of Ft. Stewart, Georgia, was stationed in Anbar for a 15-month deployment from January 2007 until April 2008. When we left in April, we were part of a large drawdown in forces from Anbar.<sup>3</sup> In conjunction with the Anbari leaders assuming Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC), the drawdown represents a success achieved by both military and security units and the local population.<sup>4</sup> Although many factors led to this success,<sup>5</sup> I primarily dealt with the local tribal leadership since I was the brigade's Tribal and Engagement Officer (TEO). The tribal heads largely form the core leadership of the Iraqi Awakening movement.

1 Campbell Robertson, "Maliki Pushes for Troop Withdrawal Date," *New York Times*, August 25, 2008.

2 Anbar is geographically the largest province in Iraq and is populated by a majority of Sunni Muslims. In January 2007, Ramadi was the most violent city per capita in the world. Al-Qa`ida in Iraq was claiming Ramadi as the capital for the Islamic State of Iraq; with a stronghold in Anbar, al-Qa`ida would be able to smuggle foreign fighters into Iraq from Syria.

3 Erica Goode, "US to Hand Over Security in Anbar to the Iraqis," *New York Times*, August 28, 2008. A Marine spokesman in Anbar said the number of American troops in the province had dropped from 37,000 in February 2008 to 25,000 in August 2008, a 33% reduction.

4 Ann Scott Tyson, "US to Hand Over Security Duties in Anbar to Iraqi Forces," *Washington Post*, August 28, 2008. Provincial Iraqi Control is a joint decision between the Iraqi government and MNF-I to systematically hand over security responsibility in a province to the Provincial Civil Authorities under the control of the province's governor.

5 Other factors include kinetic military operations, Marine Corps division leadership, and local economic and political development.

Our relationship with the Awakening yields timeless lessons that include knowing who to trust, finding middle ground, and capitalizing on ideological commonalities.<sup>6</sup> This article will discuss each of these lessons in detail and illustrate the important lessons learned from our fight against al-Qa`ida in Iraq (AQI) and the subsequent defeat of this terrorist organization in Ramadi.

### The Mission: Defeating Al-Qa`ida in Iraq

When my unit first arrived in Ramadi in January 2007, Shaykh Sattar Bizea Fitkhan Abu Risha had already established the Awakening movement and it had spread throughout the city. The 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Armor Division (1/1 AD), led by Colonel Sean McFarland, conducted operations that targeted

### "Our mission was to defeat al-Qa`ida in Iraq and secure the area."

AQI and created coalition combat outposts in Ramadi. Col. McFarland, along with 1/1 AD's deputy commander, Lieutenant-Colonel James Lechner, also built strong bonds with the local tribal leadership, which yielded a great amount of mutual respect between the tribes and American forces. When our unit assumed control of the area in mid-February 2008, we conducted a series of offensives to purge the city of AQI. Our mission was to defeat al-Qa`ida in Iraq and secure the area. In doing so, we would return a sense of normalcy to the population and set the conditions for economic and political reconstruction to sustain a functioning environment.

As the brigade's TEO, I supported the mission by studying the tribes, creating products for our intelligence assessments, and advising the brigade commander on tribal affairs. Iraq is a tribal society and many situations can be explained or improved by understanding the tribes' structure, background and

6 *Sabwa al-Iraq* is the Arabic translation for the Iraqi Awakening. When referencing the Awakening in this article, it refers to the organization that Shaykh Sattar Bizea Fitkhan Abu Risha of Ramadi began in September 2006 that has also been referred to as *Sabwa al-Anbar*, *Sabwa al-Iraq*, the Anbar Salvation Council, the Anbar Awakening Movement and the Iraqi Awakening Movement.

intricacies. By researching databases, speaking to our subordinate units who dealt with the tribes, and meeting with the tribal leaders and members, I felt confident that I was capturing an accurate assessment of the tribes and disseminating products that would help coalition members understand the nuances of the tribal environment.

### Knowing your Counterparts

The first Iraqi that I met in Ramadi was Shaykh Sattar, the founder of Iraq's Anbar Awakening Council. He led the first known Iraqi group that declared American troops as friendly forces. Shaykh Sattar and his brother who succeeded him, Shaykh Ahmad Abu Risha, went so far as to say that an attack against an American was similar to an attack against the Awakening. During a time when al-Qa`ida maintained a stranglehold in central Anbar, such comments were bold.

There were other individuals claiming the desire to bring peace to Ramadi, but their strategy was to attract nationalist insurgent groups and then "convert" the nationalists to the peaceful side.<sup>7</sup> For instance, one individual went on Arabic satellite television soliciting support to fight against al-Qa`ida, with free license to engage in attacks against Americans as well. Although that person was an acquaintance who never gave me a reason to distrust him personally, he embodies the following maxim: individuals who are publicly neutral or even portray opposing views may be trustworthy, but do not necessarily play a significant role in achieving stability. The Awakening leaders who risked their lives against al-Qa`ida in Iraq and the shaykhs' public support and recognition of our partnership gave the local people confidence to stand with us against violence and extremism.

### Finding the Middle Ground

Toward the end of our deployment, an incident occurred at Joint Security Station (JSS) Wallah<sup>8</sup> near Ramadi that threatened the accomplishments we had gained in the area. U.S. service members

7 Due to the sensitivity of the subject and the disposition of some of the individuals, their names cannot be specifically referenced.

8 JSS Wallah is located in Shaban, an area three miles north of central Ramadi. Shaban is a small tribal area that is nestled within a larger regional tribe, the Thiyabi.

and their Iraqi counterparts in the Iraqi police were stationed at JSS Wallah. Early one morning, a fight broke out between a U.S. service member and an Iraqi police officer. Allegedly, the officer stabbed the U.S. service member who then used his bayonet in self-defense, killing the policeman. The Shaban tribal members were devastated by the incident. They demanded answers as to why their tribesman was “slaughtered” and if punishment would be applied to the U.S. service member responsible. The coalition unit at JSS Wallah reported the incident immediately, and I accompanied our brigade commander, Colonel John Charlton, to JSS Wallah first thing that morning. While surveying the scene, we called a local tribal leader, Shaykh Muhammad al-Thiyabi, to ask for advice. Shaykh Muhammad is a respected member of the Awakening and the most influential tribal shaykh north of Ramadi. I asked Shaykh Muhammad if we could speak with him personally; within 30 minutes we were sitting with him in his *mutbif*, the shaykh’s meeting hall.

After we told Shaykh Muhammad the facts, he asked us to give him time to speak with the family to mediate the situation. The next day, we went to meet with the slain police officer’s family. We first went to link up with Shaykh Muhammad at his meeting hall, this time surrounded by other Awakening leaders waiting with him. We all convoyed to the family’s house to begin the mediation process. When we arrived, hundreds of Shaban tribesmen were outside, some chanting “death to America” and “the occupiers must leave.” The emotions were running high, but we recognized that the situation had the potential to become worse if we did not deal with it directly.

After a few minutes of chanting, Shaykh Muhammad appeared in the crowd and yelled at the tribesmen to let us through. When we approached the family, they demanded answers about what happened. Col. Charlton apologized for the unfortunate incident and explained to them what he knew at the time. He also ensured the family

9 The Iraqis were claiming that the Iraqi policeman was “slaughtered” because the initial bayonet strike was across his throat, similar to the way an animal is slaughtered.

that our unit wanted to cooperate with them to handle the situation in the best possible manner.

Through a series of meetings, we finally came to a resolution with the father of the slain policeman and the Shaban tribe. Col. Charlton agreed to prioritize a project in the Shaban area that the tribe had requested. Within a week, the

**“The lesson from this incident was clear: compromise is critical to achieve the goals of maintaining security and stability in an area.”**

emotions in the area subsided. Without the Awakening’s support and Shaykh Muhammad’s mediation through the process, AQI would have exploited the situation to garner support from the Shabani, risking the close partnership that we built during our 12 months of working with Iraqi police. The lesson from this incident was clear: compromise is critical to achieve the goals of maintaining security and stability in an area. Our unit accomplished this by using a local shaykh as a mediator rather than trying to do it ourselves—our close relationship with the Awakening made this possible and yielded the results needed to avert a potentially disastrous situation.

**Support Moderate Muslim Leaders**

Many Iraqis whom I met either lived a religious lifestyle or held these concepts close to their heart. Although I met Iraqis who were not Muslim, such as Christian Iraqis, I met no one who disavowed religion. Although religion plays a large role in Iraq, this should not be intimidating. During my deployment, I met a few Iraqi leaders who transcended my stereotypical view of the Sunni Muslim cleric and taught me that we had much more in common than I had ever thought. By exploring our similarities, we gained a better understanding for one another and a greater acceptance of each other’s message.

Through the Awakening leaders, we met two influential religious leaders in Ramadi, Shaykh Abdullah Jallal al-Faraji and Dr. Thamir Ibrahim al-Assafi. Shaykh Abdullah was the Sunni Endowment representative for Anbar and Dr. Thamir was a well-respected local religious authority. When Shaykh Sattar first created the Awakening, he asked Shaykh Abdullah and Dr. Thamir to issue a *fatwa* supporting the Awakening and its platform.<sup>10</sup> The clerics obliged, and in September 2006 they issued the religious decree that in part said it was acceptable to oppose al-Qa`ida, join the Awakening, and cooperate with coalition forces.

Since Shaykh Abdullah and Dr. Thamir were moderate Sunni clerics, we often found common ground in our ideologies.<sup>11</sup> During our weekly meetings, we would discuss international news, sports, and a myriad of the shaykhs’ other favorite topics. In the end, however, our engagements always had a purpose. There were times when we would meet with the clerics after we received reports about an imam giving an anti-American sermon, calling for violence and possibly destabilizing the area. Since al-Qa`ida often uses mosques as a platform to spread its extremist ideology and recruit operatives, it was important that we all knew the possible threats to our causes. At other times, the clerics would call to meet with our brigade commander or his deputy, Lieutenant-Colonel Thaddeus McWhorter, to request his assistance in gaining support for the Endowment’s functions. Although Col. Charlton and Lt. Col. McWhorter made it clear that we could not provide any material support for religious activities, our unit was able to repair mosques and schools that were damaged during combat operations.

The assistance we gave to the imams to rebuild after the destruction was symbolic of our commitment to the Iraqi people despite perceived differences in our beliefs. Shaykh Abdullah went

10 The *fatwa*, or religious decree, was issued apprehensively. Shaykh Abdullah remarked on more than one occasion that his reservations stemmed from Shaykh Sattar’s alleged alcohol consumption and disreputable past.

11 The clerics believed that extremism had no place in Islam and all people have rights that should be upheld. By the same token, people have communal responsibilities and should function in society in ways that improve humanity.

so far as to distribute a message from Col. Charlton to the local imams to be read before Ramadan. In addition to wishing the people a healthy and safe Ramadan, the message informed Iraqis of the additional measures that would be in place to ensure their safety, such as increasing checkpoints and changing the curfew. This let Iraqis know in advance of conditions that, if imposed by us without warning, would aggravate them. Without their support, more individuals would have likely opposed our efforts and al-Qa`ida in Iraq would have had a greater base of passive and active support.

### Conclusion

My unit met its mission of defeating al-Qa`ida in Ramadi and we created the necessary environment that facilitated growth and opportunity for the future. Our relationship with the tribal leaders and the members of the Awakening was a key factor in our success. Along the way, I learned the value of a "public" partnership while conducting a counter-insurgency; the importance of finding middle ground and dealing with situations through compromise; and the importance of cultivating relationships with moderate Muslims due to the strong role religion plays in Iraqi society. These valuable lessons are critical as we move forward and learn new ways in which the tribal system fuels modern warfare.

*Captain Elliot Press is an intelligence officer serving with the 3-69 Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division stationed out of Ft. Stewart, Georgia. Prior to graduating from the United States Military Academy in 2004, CPT Press studied Counter-Terrorism and International Security while earning his bachelor in science in Economics. CPT Press has had two deployments to Iraq during the past three years, totaling 24 months of deployed time as a platoon leader, battalion intelligence officer and tribal engagement officer.*

## Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

August 16, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): Abu Sayyaf Group gunmen ambushed and killed two Philippine Marines on Jolo Island in the southern Philippines. – *AP, August 16*

August 17, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber on a motorcycle targeted a checkpoint manned by the U.S.-supported "Sons of Iraq" in Azamiya district of Baghdad, killing 15 people. The Islamic State of Iraq later claimed credit for the operation. – *Reuters, August 17; AP, August 21*

August 17, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): The Taliban sent a letter to Canadian media organizations warning that Canadians need to "convince your government to put an end to the occupation of Afghanistan so that the Afghans are not killed with your hands and so that you are not killed with the hands of the Afghans." The letter threatened more attacks on Canadian nationals similar to the one that occurred on August 13, in which two Canadian aid workers were killed in Logar Province. – *CTV.ca, August 17*

August 18, 2008 (UNITED KINGDOM): A British court found Hammaad Munshi guilty of distributing information online about how to make explosives, napalm, detonators and grenades. Munshi, who was arrested when he was 16-year-old, was convicted along with two other men, Aabid Khan and Sultan Muhammad, both in their early 20s. – *AFP, August 19*

August 18, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters killed 10 French soldiers during a major battle that erupted after Taliban fighters ambushed a French reconnaissance patrol in Sarobi district, Paktika Province. Approximately 100 Taliban fighters engaged the French patrol from three sides. The Afghan Defense Ministry announced that 27 Taliban insurgents were killed in the ensuing confrontation. – *Reuters, August 19; Bloomberg, August 20*

August 18, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide car bomber rammed his explosives-laden vehicle into the gate of Camp Salerno, a major U.S. military base in Khost Province, killing at least

10 civilians. After the attack, two more suicide bombers in another vehicle approached the scene, but were shot to death by police before they were able to detonate their explosives. The Taliban claimed responsibility. – *Reuters, August 18*

August 18, 2008 (YEMEN): Security forces arrested five suspected al-Qa`ida operatives in the al-Qattan district of Hadramawt Province. Two Yemeni troops may have been killed during the operation. – *NewsYemen, August 19; AP, August 24*

August 18, 2008 (SOMALIA): A spokesman for Somalia's Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) pledged that differences among the Islamist opposition "will end soon" and that "we will continue fighting against the Ethiopian forces who invaded our homeland aggressively until they withdraw from our country." Since June, Somalia's opposition groups, including the ARS and other Islamist factions, have disagreed over a political deal signed in Djibouti. – *Bloomberg, August 19*

August 19, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters launched a significant attack on Camp Salerno, a major U.S. military base in Khost Province. During the attack, approximately 30 fighters tried to storm the base, yet were turned back by small-arms fire and helicopter gunships. Seven Taliban fighters were killed, six of whom were suicide bombers. Authorities believe that the Taliban hoped a wave of suicide bombers would soften the base's defenses, allowing Taliban gunmen to storm the base immediately after. The base was hit by a similar attack on August 18. – *AFP, August 19*

August 19, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a group of Shi`a Muslims who were gathered at a hospital in Dera Ismail Khan in the North-West Frontier Province, killing at least 25 people. – *BBC News, August 19*

August 19, 2008 (TURKEY): A suspected suicide bomber blew himself up after being stopped by police near the capital of Mersin Province. As a result of the explosion, nine policemen were wounded. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. One press report

claimed that “the vehicle was being tailed by the police who had intelligence that a suicide bomber was preparing for an attack in the city [Mersin].” – *AP, August 19*

August 19, 2008 (ALGERIA): A suicide car bomber drove his explosives-laden vehicle into a line of applicants at an Algerian police academy in Les Issers, Boumerdes Province, killing at least 43 people and making it one of the deadliest attacks to hit the country in recent years. Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb later claimed credit for the attack. – *AP, August 19; BBC News, August 22*

August 19, 2008 (YEMEN): The al-Qa`ida-linked Jund al-Yaman Brigades issued a statement on an Islamist web forum warning that it would “operate a reprisal operation very soon.” The statement came in response to an August 11 security operation that left five suspected al-Qa`ida-linked militants dead, including Hamza al-Q`uyati, a senior operative who escaped from a Political Security Organization prison in 2006. – *NewsYemen, August 20*

August 19, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): Suspected Abu Sayyaf Group militants shot and killed a Philippine Marine officer as he rode his motorcycle through Lian village in Patikul town of Sulu Province in the southern Philippines. The officer, Captain Abduhari Sulani, was in civilian clothes at the time of the attack, and despite his eventual death due to gunshot wounds, he managed to kill one of the attackers. – *GMA News.tv, August 20*

August 20, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): U.S.-led coalition forces launched an attack on Taliban militants in Laghman Province, killing more than 30 insurgents with small-arms fire and airstrikes. There were no fatal coalition casualties. – *AP, August 21*

August 20, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Three NATO soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb in Ghazni Province. – *AP, August 21*

August 20, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Missiles slammed into a suspected militant compound near Wana in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Initial reports indicate that five to 10 people

were killed in the attack. Although it is not certain who fired the missiles, press reports suggested that they were launched by U.S. military aircraft. – *AP, August 21*

August 20, 2008 (ALGERIA): A series of synchronized bombings ripped through Algeria, killing a total of 12 people. A car bomb exploded outside a military command post in the city of Bouira just 15 minutes before another car bomb ripped through a bus—filled with employees of SNC-Lavalin, a Canadian engineering and construction firm—in the same city; the latter attack accounted for all of the fatalities. It was not immediately clear whether suicide bombers were in the vehicles. Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb later claimed credit for the attacks. – *Washington Post, August 21; BBC News, August 22*

August 21, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Two suicide bombers attacked Pakistan’s main weapons building complex in Wah, Punjab Province. Although they were unable to penetrate the main gates of the high security compound, the bombers detonated their explosives as workers were changing shifts, killing 67 of them. Pakistan’s Taliban movement claimed credit for the attack. – *National Post, August 21; AP, August 23*

August 21, 2008 (TURKEY): A car bomb exploded as a police bus passed by in the Turkish coastal city of Izmir, injuring at least 16 people, including at least eight police officers. Authorities suspect that the Kurdistan Workers’ Party was behind the blast. – *AFP, August 21*

August 21, 2008 (THAILAND): A car bomb exploded in Sungai Kolok district of southern Thailand’s Narathiwat Province, killing two people. – *CNN, August 21; The Nation, August 25*

August 22, 2008 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri appeared in a new video posted on an Islamist website. During the message, al-Zawahiri paid tribute to the deaths of several al-Qa`ida commanders—most notably Abu Khabab al-Masri—who were recently killed by U.S. airstrikes. “All these men went to their Lord to complain to him about the injustices of the Americans and the betrayal of the Pakistani government,” al-Zawahiri said. – *AP, August 22*

August 22, 2008 (ISRAEL): Khaled Abu Rakaiek, a 23-year-old Bedouin and resident of Tel Sheva, was indicted in Beersheba District Court for attempting to contact al-Qa`ida with the motive of beginning a terrorist cell to execute suicide bombings in Israel. Rakaiek was arrested on July 29 by the Southern District Police and Shin Bet. – *ynetnews.com, August 22; Jerusalem Post, August 22*

August 22, 2008 (SOMALIA): According to a report in Somalia’s Garowe Online news source, gunmen loyal to the Islamic Courts movement have taken control of the key southern port town of Kismayo. One resident, speaking to a Bloomberg journalist, claimed that “Kismayo is totally under the control of al-Shabaab [of the Islamic Courts] and they are walking inside the town with their machine guns.” Heavy fighting gripped the city beginning on August 22, causing the deaths of at least 50 people. – *GaroweOnline, August 22; Bloomberg, August 22*

August 23, 2008 (IRAQ): A prominent Shi`a cleric, Haider al-Saymari, was gunned down in Basra. According to an Associated Press report, “Al-Saymari, 38, was a follower of Iraq’s top Shiite leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, a moderate. Al-Saymari was known as a critic of extremists and armed groups in Basra, particularly the Mahdi Army militia of al-Sistani’s rival, radical Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr.” It was not immediately clear who was responsible for the assassination. – *AP, August 24*

August 23, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives at a car dealership in Kirkuk, killing at least five people. The attack targeted the leader of a group fighting al-Qa`ida in Khalis of Diyala Province; the leader, identified as Abdel Karim Ahmed Mindil, was killed in the explosion. – *AFP, August 23*

August 23, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide car bomber attacked a police station in Swat District of the North-West Frontier Province, killing at least six policemen. The Taliban claimed credit for the operation. – *AP, August 22*

August 23, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani troops, assisted by helicopter gunships, claimed to have killed 37 Taliban-linked militants in Swat District of the North-West Frontier Province. Two soldiers

were killed during the operation. – *AP, August 23*

August 24, 2008 (IRAQ): The U.S. military announced that it arrested an al-Qa`ida operative responsible for the 2006 kidnapping of *The Christian Science Monitor* journalist Jill Carroll. According to the statement, the operative, Salim Abdullah Ashur al-Shujayri (also known as Abu Uthman), was arrested on August 11. Carroll, abducted in January 2006, was released three months after her abduction. Another news report further stated that “Shujayri’s associates are said to have included Al Qaeda in Iraq members involved in the 2004 abduction of Margaret Hassan, the head of Care International in Iraq. She was found slain in November 2004.” – *AP, August 24; Los Angeles Times, August 25*

August 24, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber attacked a large group of people who were celebrating a man’s release from detention, killing at least 25 of them. The attack, which occurred in Abu Ghurayb in Baghdad Province, appeared to target Iraqis who had been cooperating with the U.S. government, as many of the guests at the party included police and military officials, along with men affiliated with the “Sons of Iraq” movement. – *Los Angeles Times, August 25*

August 24, 2008 (IRAQ): A 13-year-old girl wearing an explosives vest turned herself into the Iraqi police in Ba`quba, Diyala Province, because she did not want to become a suicide bomber. – *TimesOnline, August 25*

August 24, 2008 (YEMEN): Authorities announced the arrests of six alleged al-Qa`ida operatives in Ebin Province. – *AP, August 24*

August 25, 2008 (PAKISTAN): The Pakistani government banned the militant group Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, freezing its assets and bank accounts. – *AFP, August 25*

August 25, 2008 (MAURITANIA): The suspected head of al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb’s operations in Mauritania, El Khadim Ould Esseman, released a letter from his prison cell to Agence-France Presse, in which he demanded Muslims not to recognize the new ruling military junta, saying

that “the Muslim faith disqualifies him [the head of the junta] from leading the Muslim nation because he is comparable to an infidel.” – *AFP, August 25*

August 26, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives amid a group of Iraqis attempting to join the police force in Jalula, Diyala Province, killing at least 25 people. – *AP, August 26*

August 26, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Antonio Maria Costa, executive director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, said that drought and anti-drug campaigns have cut opium poppy cultivation 19% this year compared to 2007. He warned, however, that the Taliban could still earn \$70 million from the harvest in 2008. – *AP, August 26*

August 26, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. Consulate vehicle came under gunfire when traveling through Peshawar, the capital of the North-West Frontier Province. There were no casualties, and the vehicle managed to flee the scene. According to a press report, the consulate official “left her house and was headed to her office when gunmen in a blue Land Cruiser blocked the car’s path and opened fire.” – *CNN, August 26*

August 26, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A blast ripped through a roadside café on the outskirts of Islamabad, killing seven people. It was not immediately clear whether the blast was from a bomb, or if it was accidental. Authorities do believe, however, that explosives were involved. – *Reuters, August 27*

August 27, 2008 (ALGERIA): Security forces confronted al-Qa`ida-linked militants in the Batna region, sparking a gun battle that left five soldiers and two policemen dead. – *AP, August 30*

August 28, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A bomb ripped through a prison bus in Bannu District of the North-West Frontier Province, killing at least nine people. – *AP, August 28*

August 28, 2008 (YEMEN): Yemeni authorities announced that they had apprehended 30 suspected al-Qa`ida militants who were planning to launch attacks in Saudi Arabia. The men, all Yemenis, were arrested in Hadramawt Province. Police claimed that the arrests came as a result of information

found on a computer confiscated during an August 11 gun battle in Tarim, Hadramawt Province. – *Indo-Asian News Service, August 28*

August 28, 2008 (SOMALIA): According to the *Financial Times*, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has signaled that he may withdraw Ethiopian troops from Somalia before the country’s transitional government achieves stability. Ethiopia invaded Somalia in December 2006 to oust the Islamic Courts Union, which were consolidating control over much of the country. Somalia’s Islamists welcomed Zenawi’s suggestion, with its spokesman stating, “We are very happy to hear the screaming of Meles to pull out his unjust soldiers in Somalia. We are also happy the arrogance of Meles splits and breaks.” – *Bloomberg, August 29*

August 29, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide car bomber targeted a security checkpoint in Dara Adam Khel in the North-West Frontier Province, killing two civilians and wounding 29 Frontier Corps soldiers. – *AFP, August 28*

August 29, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Government airstrikes killed at least 22 militants in the Swat valley of the North-West Frontier Province. – *AFP, August 29*

August 29, 2008 (MOROCCO): Morocco’s state news agency reported that security services recently apprehended 15 members of an Islamist militant network that had access to chemicals and electronic components and were planning attacks in Morocco. The group, identified as Conquest of Andalusia, is accused of having links to al-Qa`ida. – *Reuters, August 29*

August 30, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A missile fired from Afghanistan hit a suspected Taliban or al-Qa`ida compound near Wana in South Waziristan Agency, killing at least five people. Unconfirmed reports state that four of those killed were foreigners. – *AFP, August 30*

August 30, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): One of the founders of the Rajah Solaiman Movement, an Islamic militant group accused of conducting several bombings in the Philippines in 2004 and 2005, was deported to Manila from Bahrain. Ruben Lavilla, also known as Shaykh Omar Lavilla, was arrested in Bahrain

on July 24, an arrest that was not reported publicly at the time. In Bahrain, Lavilla was working as an editor of a local magazine and was also working as an interpreter at the Philippine Embassy. His identity was discovered after his request for a loan at a local bank in Bahrain aroused suspicions. A conflicting report, however, states that Lavilla was arrested after applying for a job at the Philippine Embassy. – *Reuters, August 30; AP, August 30*

August 30, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): Suspected Abu Sayyaf Group militants killed four soldiers on Jolo Island in the southern Philippines. An unknown number of militants were also killed. – *AFP, August 29*

August 31, 2008 (IRAQ): The *Sunday Telegraph* reported that an elite group of British commandos have killed or captured 3,500 suspected Iraqi terrorists in Baghdad during the last two years. – *UPI, August 31*

September 1, 2008 (IRAQ): The U.S. military handed security control of Anbar Province to Iraqi government forces. U.S. President George W. Bush marked the handover by stating, “Today, Anbar is no longer lost to al-Qa`ida, it is al-Qa`ida that lost Anbar.” – *Independent, September 2*

September 2, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Nine Australian soldiers were wounded during an overnight battle with Taliban fighters in Uruzgan Province. – *AP, September 2; Bloomberg, September 3*

September 2, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): An Afghan official said that 22 Taliban fighters were killed during a clash in Zabul Province. – *AP, September 3*

September 2, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): An Afghan official said that 10 Taliban fighters were killed during a clash in Helmand Province. – *AP, September 3*

September 2, 2008 (PAKISTAN): The chief of Pakistan’s Interior Ministry told reporters that Pakistani troops almost captured Ayman al-Zawahiri recently, but “missed the chance.” Rahman Malik explained that security forces “traced” al-Zawahiri to Mohmand Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, but were unable to pinpoint his exact location. – *BBC News, September 2*

September 2, 2008 (PAKISTAN): The head of Pakistan’s Interior Ministry said that “there are similarities between al-Qa`ida and TTP” and that there is a “close connection” between the two organizations. He also said that Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is “a host to al-Qa`ida and is their mouthpiece.” – *UPI, September 2*

September 3, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters attacked a Canadian security patrol in southern Afghanistan, killing three Canadian soldiers. – *Reuters, September 3*

September 3, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani may have escaped an assassination attempt, as two bullets “hit the window glass” of Gilani’s bulletproof vehicle as it drove through Rawalpindi. An official said after the attack that “the prime minister had not yet landed from Lahore when the incident took place. The motorcade was on its way to the airport to receive him.” – *The Australian, September 4*

September 3, 2008 (PAKISTAN): According to an Associated Press report, “American forces conducted a raid inside Pakistan Wednesday, a senior U.S. military official said, in the first known foreign ground assault against a suspected Taliban haven.” The operation took place in Pakistan’s South Waziristan Agency. – *Reuters, September 3; AP, September 3*

September 4, 2008 (GLOBAL): The head of al-Qa`ida’s Afghanistan operations, Shaykh Sa`id Mustafa Abu’l-Yazid, appeared in a new videotape threatening more attacks against Denmark. Referring to the June 2 attack on the Danish Embassy in Islamabad, al-Yazid warned that “the Danish Embassy [attack] and prior operations is but the beginning...if you don’t end your errant ways and aggression.” Al-Yazid was presumed killed by Pakistani airstrikes in Bajaur Agency in early August, but his death was never confirmed. – *Gulf News, September 5; Reuters, September 5*

September 4, 2008 (UNITED STATES): Aafia Siddiqui, a U.S.-educated Pakistani woman accused of supporting al-Qa`ida, refused to appear in federal court. Another hearing has been set for September 22. Siddiqui was allegedly

arrested in Afghanistan’s Ghazni Province on July 17, after planning to conduct a martyrdom operation against Ghazni’s provincial governor. According to an affidavit, when FBI agents and U.S. military personnel attempted to take custody of her from Afghan officials, Siddiqui managed to arm herself and fire at the U.S. personnel; she was wounded during the altercation. – *Boston Globe, August 6; MailOnline, August 6; Guardian, August 8; AP, September 4*

September 4, 2008 (IRAQ): A U.S. military spokesman announced that control of Sunni Awakening groups will be handed over to the Iraqi government starting October 1. – *CNN, September 4*

September 4, 2008 (GERMANY): Authorities announced that on August 19 they charged a German man of Pakistani heritage with membership in al-Qa`ida. The man, who was arrested in February, was identified only as “Aleem N.,” and he allegedly traveled “regularly” between Germany and Pakistan, agreeing to “take part in al-Qa`ida activities.” According to prosecutors, “His duty is suspected to have been to acquire money and equipment in Germany for military use and recruit further members as well as fighters for the organization.” – *AP, September 4*

September 4, 2008 (ISRAEL): Hamas detained the leader of a pro-al-Qa`ida group in the Gaza Strip. Abu Hafss, the leader of Jaysh al-Umma, allegedly supports al-Qa`ida’s ideology but does not claim to be linked to the international terrorist group. – *Reuters, September 4*

September 5, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide car bomber targeted the convoy of Shi`a politician Ahmad Chalabi in Baghdad. Although Chalabi escaped unharmed, six of his guards were killed in the explosion. – *Los Angeles Times, September 6*

September 6, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide car bomber detonated his explosives at a market in Tal Afar, Ninawa Province, killing six people. – *AP, September 6*

September 6, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A Taliban suicide bomber disguised as a beggar attacked a government building in Nimroz Province, killing six people. – *AFP, September 6*



September 6, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): More than 100 Taliban fighters attacked a police post in Nimroz Province, killing two policemen. Approximately eight Taliban fighters died during the attack. – *AFP, September 6*

September 6, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide car bomber attacked a security checkpoint on the outskirts of Peshawar, killing approximately 30 people. – *AP, September 6; Voice of America, September 6*

September 7, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber was shot to death near an intelligence department in Zabul Province. The bomber failed to detonate his explosives. – *AFP, September 8*

September 7, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Two suicide bombers detonated their explosives at the police headquarters in Kandahar, killing six policemen. – *AP, September 7*

September 7, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): An alleged breakaway faction of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front along with the Abu Sayyaf Group engaged in a firefight with government forces on Basilan Island in the southern Philippines. Authorities claim that there were no casualties on the government side. The insurgents withdrew in different directions during the firefight. – *Sun Star, September 9*

September 8, 2008 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida released a videotape to mark the anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. During the video, al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri accused Iran of “cooperating with the Americans in occupying Iraq and Afghanistan.” Among other topics, the video celebrated the resignation of former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, and criticized the Lebanese militant group Hizb Allah. In addition to al-Zawahiri, prominent al-Qa`ida operative Abu Yahya al-Libi also appeared in the video. – *AP, September 8*

September 8, 2008 (UNITED KINGDOM): In the trial of eight men accused of attempting to blow up aircraft heading from London to North America using liquid explosives, the jury was unable to agree to convict the men on the most serious of charges filed against them. After deliberating for 56 hours, the

jury found three men guilty of a lesser charge of conspiring to kill using liquid explosives; according to a Reuters report, however, the jury “was not convinced by the prosecution’s case that they intended to blow up aircraft from London’s Heathrow airport to Canada and the United States.” Of the other five suspects, the jury failed to reach a verdict on four of them, while the fifth was acquitted on all charges. Prosecutors plan to seek a retrial for seven of the men. – *Reuters, September 10*

September 8, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A NATO airstrike killed 12 Taliban militants who had attacked a district center in Paktia Province. A spokesman for the provincial government claimed that “nine of them [the dead] are Chechens and three are Afghans and Pakistanis.” – *Thomson Financial, September 9*

September 8, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Missiles pummeled a house and seminary run by Taliban commander Jalaluddin Haqqani, or his son, in Miran Shah of North Waziristan Agency. The missiles, presumed fired by U.S. unmanned aircraft, killed approximately 25 people. Pakistani intelligence officials identified four foreign fighters killed in the attack, one of whom has been identified as Abu Haris, al-Qa`ida’s newly appointed chief for Pakistan. Pakistani intelligence officials claim that a number of Haqqani’s family members were killed in the attack. – *International Herald Tribune, September 9; The Australian, September 11*

September 8, 2008 (ALGERIA): According to press reports, authorities broke up an al-Qa`ida-linked terrorist cell that was planning to deploy a female suicide bomber to attack a military barracks. – *AKI, September 8*

September 9, 2008 (IRAQ): The head of the al-Qa`ida-affiliated Islamic State of Iraq, Abu `Umar al-Baghdadi, released an audio message on Islamist websites calling for the assassination of all members of the Iraqi Islamic Party, the country’s main Sunni Arab political party. According to al-Baghdadi, “We hereby declare the Islamic Party, with all its tendencies, its leadership and its members, to be an enemy of God and his prophet. It is a sect of apostasy which should be killed wherever its members

are found.” An Iraqi government spokesman responded to the tape, saying, “The call of Abu `Umar al-Baghdadi to assassinate Iraqi officials, mainly Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi, is a clear sign of its failure and its defeat in front of Iraqis and their national unity.” – *AP, September 10; UPI, September 11*

September 9, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A Taliban spokesman announced that the reason they have increased attacks on Canadian troops is because an upcoming “election is being held in Canada.” The spokesman said that his suggestion “for the next prime minister is to withdraw Canadians from Afghanistan.” – *The Canadian Press, September 10*

September 9, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Three international soldiers and one Afghan contractor were killed by an Improvised Explosive Device in eastern Afghanistan. – *Thomson Financial, September 9*

September 9, 2008 (SOMALIA): A member of Somalia’s parliament was assassinated as he left a mosque in Baidoa. The Islamist militant group al-Shabab later took credit for the operation. – *Voice of America, September 10*

September 9, 2008 (THAILAND): Separatist Muslim-Malay insurgents in southern Thailand’s Pattani Province shot dead and then beheaded a Buddhist state official. – *Reuters, September 9*

September 10, 2008 (GLOBAL): The U.S. military released a series of letters authored by al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri directed to al-Qa`ida’s affiliates in Iraq. In one letter, al-Zawahiri criticizes the Islamic State of Iraq’s media operations, writing, “The media policy for the Islamic State is using exaggeration, to the extent of lying.” The letters also lamented about the poor communication between al-Qa`ida’s core leadership and its operatives in Iraq, in addition to outlining the difficulty of infiltrating foreign fighters into Iraq. – *CNN, September 11*

September 10, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Taliban fighters threw grenades into a Sunni mosque in Dir District of the North-West Frontier Province, killing approximately 25 people. As worshippers fled the grenade blasts,

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**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  
Web: www.ctc.usma.edu/sentinel/

\* For Press Inquiries: (845) 667-6383

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the militants opened fire on them. It appears that the Sunni on Sunni violence occurred because local tribal elders had recently condemned the Taliban. – *The Australian*, September 12

September 11, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Taliban militants beheaded two police recruits one week after abducting them in Orakzai Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *AFP*, September 11

September 12, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide truck bomber detonated his explosives in the Shi`a town of Dujail, Salah al-Din Province, killing at least 31 people. – *AFP*, September 12

September 12, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber blew himself up outside a Shi`a mosque in Sinjar, Ninawa Province, killing two people. – *AFP*, September 12

September 12, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. unmanned aircraft killed at least 12 people in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *Washington Post*, September 12

September 12, 2008 (GERMANY): German authorities arrested a Turkish man, identified as “Omer O.,” for raising money and recruiting supporters for al-Qa`ida. The arrest is tied to the case of “Aleem N.,” a German man of Pakistani heritage who was charged with membership in al-Qa`ida on August 19. – *AP*, September 13; *Reuters*, September 13

September 12, 2008 (LEBANON): Jordanian security officials announced that al-Qa`ida operatives have infiltrated southern Lebanon's `Ayn al-Hilwa refugee camp. The officials believe that al-Qa`ida is attempting to recruit Palestinians in the camp. – *UPI*, September 12

September 13, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked Afghanistan's governor for Logar Province, Abdullah Wardak, killing him along with three of his men. The attack occurred 12 miles west of Kabul. According to Reuters, “He is the second provincial governor to be assassinated by suicide bombers in recent years.” – *Reuters*, September 13; *AFP*, September 13

September 13, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters ambushed a police patrol in Ghazni Province, killing seven officers. – *AP*, September 14

September 13, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Approximately 100 Taliban militants raided a government office in Nasir Bagh on the outskirts of Peshawar, in the country's North-West Frontier Province. – *CNN*, September 14

September 13, 2008 (INDIA): A series of explosions ripped through civilian areas of New Delhi, killing 21 people. The terrorist group Indian Mujahidin claimed credit for the bombing operation. – *Bloomberg*, September 15; *AP*, September 14

September 14, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide car bomber attacked a convoy of Afghan doctors working for the United Nations in the Spin Boldak district of Kandahar Province, killing two doctors and their driver. – *AP*, September 14; *Reuters*, September 14

September 14, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Security forces attacked suspected militant safe houses in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing approximately 32 people. – *AP*, September 15

September 15, 2008 (IRAQ): A female suicide bomber detonated her explosives in Balad Ruz, Diyala Province, killing at least 20 people. The blast targeted police officers. – *CNN*, September 15

September 15, 2008 (IRAQ): Two car bombs detonated in Baghdad's Karrada district, killing five civilians. – *AP*, September 15

September 15, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A bomb hidden in a motorcycle exploded in Shindand district of Herat Province. The dead included the son and three bodyguards of a district chief. – *AFP*, September 15

September 15, 2008 (MAURITANIA): Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb militants ambushed a patrol of soldiers, killing 12 of them. The attack occurred 45 miles east of the town of Zouerat. – *AFP*, September 15