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Contents

FEATURE ARTICLE

- 1 The U.S.-Pakistan Relationship in the Year Ahead**
By Ahmed Rashid

REPORTS

- 5 Profiles of Mexico's Seven Major Drug Trafficking Organizations**
By Peter Chalk
- 8 Bioterrorism: Still a Threat to the United States**
By Leonard A. Cole
- 12 Radicalization Processes in Afghanistan**
By Marisa L. Porges
- 15 Individual Jihadist Operations in Europe: Patterns and Challenges**
By Petter Nesser
- 18 Al-Shabab's Western Recruitment Strategy**
By Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens
- 22 Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity**
- 28 CTC Sentinel Staff & Contacts**

About the CTC Sentinel

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

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The U.S.-Pakistan Relationship in the Year Ahead

By Ahmed Rashid



Pakistani students demonstrate against the November 2011 cross-border NATO airstrike on Pakistani troops. - Photo by AFP/Getty Images

IN THE PAST six months, a series of major incidents between the United States and Pakistan has brought their relationship to a new low. Even Pakistan's longstanding allies and European aid donors are increasingly at odds with Islamabad's current foreign policy. These tensions have Pakistani civilians feeling as if their country is at war with the world.

Although all of Pakistan's international relationships are important, it is the one with the United States that is most critical to its future stability as well as the maintenance of peace in South Asia. The 60-year alliance between the United States and Pakistan is deteriorating rapidly.¹ A key question

for the year 2012 will be whether the United States and Pakistan can rebuild a much abused relationship.

This article will review the primary incidents that led to the worsening of relations in 2011, identify some U.S. missteps, warn of a number of flashpoints that could occur in 2012, and finally offer critical suggestions for how the U.S.-Pakistan relationship can be resuscitated in the months ahead.

The Year 2011 in Review:

The Fracturing U.S.-Pakistan Alliance

The May 2011 killing of al-Qa`ida leader Usama bin Ladin by U.S. Special Operations Forces in Abbottabad, close to a Pakistani military base, humiliated the Pakistani Army. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has avoided the question of whether it was complicit in hiding Bin Ladin, or merely incompetent

¹ The U.S.-Pakistan relationship perhaps reached its peak in June 2004, when President George W. Bush designated Pakistan a "major non-Nato ally." See "Bush Names Pakistan 'Major Ally,'" BBC, June 17, 2004.

in not discovering the al-Qa`ida chief earlier. Instead, it has beat the drum of protecting the country's sovereignty on account of repeated U.S. "aggression." By November 26, 2011, when 24 Pakistani soldiers were killed by U.S. helicopters and fighters jets in Pakistani territory at a checkpoint on the Afghan border, the U.S.-Pakistan relationship had deteriorated dramatically.² The United States had failed to convince the Pakistan Army to rein in the Taliban's Haqqani network, and Pakistan now felt it was being targeted by the United States deliberately in retaliation.

At home, the Pakistan Army's image was dented by the killing of Bin Ladin in Abbottabad and the Pakistani Taliban attack on the Karachi naval base. Both incidents highlighted the military's failure to provide security—in the first instance, a U.S. military force violated Pakistan's sovereignty undetected; in the second, a band of Pakistani Taliban fighters breached one of the country's most secure military facilities.

Due to these two embarrassments, Pakistan's military went on a domestic offensive by allowing and encouraging a wave of anti-Americanism to sweep the country and by depicting itself as a victim of U.S. machinations. Pakistan's military manipulated the local media, allowed banned Islamic extremist parties to hold rallies in the streets, and persuaded parliament to defend the army's position. As each crisis point with the United States played out, the military ensured that Pakistan's elected, civilian government was sitting under a cloud of uncertainty and paralysis regarding its tenure and longevity. Yet it is also true that on the street and among the army rank-and-file, anti-Americanism is rampant to the point that younger army officers are demanding that General Ashfaq Parvez Kiyani, the Pakistan Army chief, break relations with the United States entirely.

Today, anti-Americanism has become the passport to political legitimacy and patriotism in Pakistan. Sustaining the *ghairat*, or honor of the country, has come to dominate the collective mindset at the cost of rational dialogue or other

critical issues such as the country's ongoing economic crisis. Defending national sovereignty, even at the price of allowing anti-American, Islamist extremist groups to operate on its soil, is considered acceptable by many. Army chief Kiyani has mobilized additional forces and a range of anti-aircraft weaponry on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and ordered his troops to shoot down any future American intruders, without answering the key question of what would happen should that outcome occur.

An already weak and paranoid civilian government has virtually given up on governance, and has been beset with scandals. It is cowed by the military one day, terrified by an angry public the next. Other days it is defiant and threatens the army, while at the same time is in danger of being thrown out of office by the Supreme Court. The latest crisis is the "memogate" scandal in which Hussain Haqqani, Pakistan's former ambassador to Washington, is alleged to have asked an intermediary to send a memo to the Obama administration asking for American help to defang the military's all powerful ISI. This has already led to questions on whether President Asif Ali Zardari, who is ill but defiant, will survive politically or whether he will be linked to "memogate" and be forced to resign.

In the wider world and the global marketplace, there is naturally enormous international concern when a nuclear weapon state places honor before discourse and negotiations. While most of the more than \$2 billion in U.S. aid to Pakistan for 2011-2012 has been canceled, suspended or slowed down, even European diplomats who provide major donor aid to Pakistan are angry that the country refuses to carry out desperately needed economic reforms.

The economy is crashing, while inflation and joblessness are reaching intolerable levels. As of early 2012, Pakistan's civilian government has failed to provide gas, can only keep the electricity running for a few hours a day, and has been unable to alleviate constant fuel shortages. The country's infrastructure—railways, the national airline, the supply of gas, electricity and fuel—are all in poor condition.

Contributing to the tensions is the country's failure to provide security to its citizens. Even as the Afghan Taliban continue to enjoy safe sanctuaries in Pakistan, the army is fighting the Pakistani Taliban in the northwest who are determined to overthrow the government. Since 2004, thousands of soldiers and civilians have died in Pakistani Taliban suicide attacks. Pakistan also suffers from the separatist insurgency in Baluchistan, which is becoming bloodier by the day.

As a result of this violence, large tracts of the country are no longer controlled by the government, while other regions have been denuded of their population through insurgency, sectarian warfare, ethnic conflict and multiple natural disasters including two consecutive years of devastating floods in Sindh Province. There are millions of internally displaced persons as a result of conflicts in two provinces and floods in another two, although there is no definitive knowledge of the true figure or where many of the displaced citizens have taken refuge.

U.S. Missteps

There is little doubt, however, that Pakistan's series of crises have been exacerbated by a mismanaged U.S. strategy for Pakistan. For eight years, former President George W. Bush largely preferred not to recognize that there were Taliban on Pakistani soil because former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf was considered a close ally. Between 2001 and 2010, Pakistan received approximately \$20 billion in U.S. funds, with the majority of the money going to the military, while the economy and civil society were largely ignored.³ Still, the army resented that it was never taken on board as a partner to discuss the Bush administration's Afghanistan strategy. That resentment has only deepened under President Barack Obama, who promised a tougher but more realistic U.S. strategy with aid geared toward Pakistan's civilian sector. Yet the Obama administration has also remained unwilling to share with the Pakistan Army its plans for Afghanistan, and it has intensified drone attacks in Pakistani territory,

² "Pakistan Buries 24 Troops Killed in NATO Airstrike," BBC, November 27, 2011.

³ Chris Allbritton, "Analysis: Civilians Have Hand in Showdown With Pakistan Military," Reuters, January 13, 2012.

periodically crossed the Pakistan border without permission, and deployed spies across the country.

The Obama administration surged troop levels in Afghanistan even while announcing their withdrawal. It pledged to build a regional alliance to support Afghanistan, yet this has not come to fruition. Talks with the Afghan Taliban were repeatedly delayed due to reported opposition from the Pentagon and Central Intelligence Agency.

From the perspective of Pakistan's military, these factors suggest that there is not a credible U.S. plan to transition security in Afghanistan to local forces post-2014. Washington's so-called transition is perceived in Pakistan as a hasty exit strategy, similar to what just recently occurred in Iraq, which is already creating a political crisis in that Middle East state. The U.S. withdrawal will likely leave behind a

“From the perspective of Pakistan’s military, these factors suggest that there is not a credible U.S. plan to transition security in Afghanistan to local forces post-2014.”

deeply polarized Afghanistan, acute ethnic rivalries, a weak economy and the prospect of civil war. Moreover, Pakistan is alarmed by what it views as greater U.S. reliance on India for its post-2014 Afghanistan plans, which to Pakistan is completely unacceptable since the two states are rivals. As a result, whether out of anger or strategy, Pakistan's ISI has retained its most significant card—the Afghan Taliban leaders who have sought refuge on its soil.

Further Risks to the U.S.-Pakistan Relationship in 2012

Due to the series of incidents between the U.S. and Pakistani militaries in 2011, the Pakistan Army has broken nearly all links with the United States regarding its support for the U.S. war in Afghanistan: U.S. and NATO supplies

through Pakistan for Afghanistan have been stopped; an airbase used by the U.S. drone campaign has been evacuated; military and intelligence sharing are at a halt; and all written agreements with the United States are being reviewed by Islamabad. Pakistan is demanding an end to drone flights and fewer CIA agents on the ground. To prevent worsening the crisis, the U.S. halted all drone strikes over Pakistan in late November and December 2011.⁴ Certainly, military-to-military relations will improve in 2012, but Pakistan will not give the United States the kind of *carte blanche* it had in the past.

In 2012, however, there is a real danger that another bloody incident between the two militaries could occur and worsen the crisis. There are several triggers for underlying tensions to explode. First, between 10,000 and 20,000 U.S. Marines are expected to redeploy from Helmand and Kandahar in southern Afghanistan to the provinces of eastern Afghanistan to tackle the virulent Taliban network of Jalaluddin Haqqani in the spring of 2012.⁵ This will raise tensions with Pakistan, and could risk another dangerous incident and even increase the chances of direct U.S.-Pakistan clashes or the downing of aircraft.

Second, there are accusations that Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security, which is tired of the ISI's long-running support to the Afghan Taliban, is allegedly providing sanctuary in mountainous Kunar Province to Maulana Qazi Fazlullah and his fighters. Fazlullah leads a faction of the Pakistani Taliban who fled the Swat Valley after being ousted by the Pakistan Army in 2009. They escaped into Afghanistan and are now attacking Pakistani positions along the border before retreating back to Kunar—just as the Afghan Taliban retreat into Pakistan after launching attacks. Fazlullah is also linked to Hakimullah Mehsud, the virulent leader of the Pakistani Taliban.⁶ If Fazlullah is not stopped by the spring, the Pakistanis

could intervene, ratcheting up border tensions even more.

Third, Pakistan says it will respond with force to any new U.S.-NATO intrusion—even if by mistake—into its territory. This is a threat that any one of the 147,000 soldiers on the eastern border could undertake with or without orders.

Hope for an Improving Relationship?

Can the United States and Pakistan emerge from this poisonous swamp of a relationship, and is there a common agenda that could reunite and rebuild trust at some level? First, it should not be expected that the relationship will reach its previous heights. Instead, the first building blocks have to be restarting military and intelligence cooperation—even at a minimal level. Second, the Pakistanis will not budge until they hear what future U.S. plans for Afghanistan entail and are assured that Pakistan will be seriously consulted before the United States takes major steps—for example, such as the escalated withdrawal of U.S. troops that the Obama administration is expected to announce at the May NATO summit in Chicago.

The most realistic hope for the future is for the United States and Pakistan to jointly develop a political reconciliation plan for Afghanistan that could end the Taliban insurgency, bring the Taliban to the table and initiate a four way dialogue among the Taliban, Kabul, Washington and Islamabad. While Pakistan has supported reconciliation (but has not delivered on it), the United States has been ambivalent. The divisions within the Obama administration may now be coming to an end, however, as all parts of the U.S. government recognize that there can be no orderly U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan—and nor will Karzai have a chance to succeed—without a reduction if not an end to the insurgency.

There are four separate processes where reconciliation has been pursued. The first is the long running, off-and-on again dialogue between Pakistan and Afghanistan. This stalled in late 2011 after the Afghans became fed up with Pakistan's refusal to offer Taliban leaders with whom to negotiate, as well as the September murder in Kabul of Karzai's main interlocutor, Burhanuddin

4 Drone strikes resumed in Pakistan on January 11, 2012.

5 Robert Burns, “Afghanistan: Marines to Wind Down Combat in 2012,” *Huffington Post*, November 26, 2011.

6 The ISI alleges that the CIA and Indian intelligence are also backing Fazlullah.

Rabbani, who the Afghans accuse the ISI of killing but which Pakistan denies.

The second is the three way U.S.-Pakistan-Afghanistan dialogue that is called the “core group dialogue.” It has also stalled due to Rabbani’s death, the November border incident, as well as Pakistan’s refusal to attend the Bonn gathering in December where a critical core group meeting was scheduled to take place. Both these dialogues are based on the assumption that once they get started, the Taliban will join them.

Third, there has been a direct Kabul-Taliban secret dialogue that has had its positives and negatives. Its key Taliban interlocutor, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the second-in-command of the Afghan Taliban, was arrested by the ISI two years ago and has not been released, nor has any reason been given for his continued detention despite repeated requests by Karzai for Pakistan to free him. The Afghans accuse the Pakistanis of being in denial that they are keeping the Taliban leaders, while the ISI by its actions has demonstrated that it will not encourage independent talks between Kabul and the Taliban without Pakistani involvement.

The fourth path has modestly proved to be the most successful. A German-led initiative with backing from Qatar brought together this summer a Taliban mediator and mid-level U.S. officials who held several meetings in Doha, Qatar. According to Western diplomats, after months of delay, the Americans had agreed to announce at the December 2011 Bonn meeting that there would be an exchange of prisoners⁷ between the United States and the Taliban as a confidence building measure and the Taliban could open a liaison office in Qatar so that talks could continue more freely.

Pakistan has always opposed the Qatar office,⁸ and in January 2012 an ominous development occurred. The Afghan Taliban and Pakistani Taliban announced that they agreed to unite to intensify their attacks on U.S. troops in

Afghanistan, and the Pakistani Taliban said they would refrain from attacking Pakistani forces. For months, the ISI had been in dialogue with the various Pakistani Taliban groups to initiate a cease-fire, and the announcement means that the ISI has persuaded Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar to assist in the negotiations. What this may portend for Afghanistan when the Taliban launch their spring offensive against U.S. forces is not clear, but clearly the Taliban are also—like the Americans—going to keep a “talk-fight” strategy for some time.

Indeed, despite all the peace talk activity, there has been only one point of contact facilitated by the ISI. It arranged a meeting among U.S. officials, the head of the ISI and Ibrahim Haqqani, the son of Jalaluddin Haqqani, in the United Arab Emirates in August 2011.⁹ Clearly, the meeting was unsuccessful because the Haqqani network attacked the U.S. Embassy in Kabul the following month.

Pakistan needs to be brought into any U.S.-Taliban dialogue as soon as possible. Without Pakistan’s participation, it is unlikely that the Taliban leaders based in Pakistan who are resentful, but extremely fearful, of the ISI will be sufficiently emboldened to take such talks further, while Pakistan’s non-cooperation could prove to be detrimental as it could act as a spoiler. Indeed, the Afghans argue that Pakistan is already a spoiler.

To his credit, U.S. Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Marc Grossman tried to sustain the core group dialogue on Afghanistan through summer and autumn 2011, even as the rest of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship was collapsing around him. He hoped that even as other disputes emerged, both countries had a common desire and an intrinsic need to retain their dialogue on Afghanistan reconciliation. Grossman’s efforts, however, came to a halt, overwhelmed by the weight of the military’s ire at the Americans and Pakistan’s unwillingness to cooperate due to its anger at the Qatar talks. Grossman has had a particularly tough year trying to keep the Afghan talks ongoing, combating resistance from

within the interagency process in Washington and suffering from a lack of assistance from Pakistan.

Now the core group dialogue needs to be urgently reactivated. Grossman must show that he has the direct support of President Obama. The Taliban contacts made through Germany and Qatar need to be involved with the core group. Ultimately, the four processes must merge and produce a common set of negotiators and negotiations to take the peace process further. None of this is possible until a modicum of trust is reestablished between the United States and Pakistan. Only then can the critical issue of how, when and under what conditions can Pakistan send the Afghan Taliban back to Afghanistan to take part in reconciliation.

On a broader front, the core group could also discuss how to end all terrorist safe havens in Pakistan, not just for the Taliban but for other groups that threaten Central Asia, the Caucasus, India and Kashmir. The Pakistan Army needs to be weaned away from its reliance on extremists to pursue its foreign policy goals. This can only happen once the imagined or real threats from India and Afghanistan are diminished. Only that can give friends, allies and neighbors the confidence that Pakistan is determined to further regional and global stability and not unsettle the region by leveraging extremists.

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⁷ “Clinton Appears to Acknowledge Talks about Transferring Taliban Prisoners from Guantanamo,” Associated Press, January 11, 2012.

⁸ By mid-January 2012, there were signs that Pakistan’s military was softening its position on this issue.

⁹ David Ignatius, “The Challenge of Getting the Taliban to the Table,” *Washington Post*, January 11, 2012.

Profiles of Mexico's Seven Major Drug Trafficking Organizations

By Peter Chalk

DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS (DTOs) in Mexico have emerged with alarming speed during the last several years, plunging the country's northern border states into a virtual war zone as they compete for lucrative smuggling routes into the United States.¹ Although Mexican President Felipe Calderon has moved to decisively dislodge the cartels' power base since taking office in 2006, several prominent organizations continue to exist, benefiting from pervasive corruption that has extended to the highest echelons of Mexico's law enforcement bureaucracy.

While DTOs have obvious ramifications for Mexican stability, their activities have also directly impinged on U.S. security, with high-level criminality north of the border frequently "migrating" south. This has been particularly evident in Arizona, which currently has among the highest rates of drug-related kidnappings in the United States. Another state experiencing difficulties is Texas, where merchants and wealthy families in frontier towns periodically face extortion threats and which occasionally witnesses narco-murders.² On a wider level, syndicates have directly contributed to a growing problem of inner-city gang violence; Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Dallas and San Francisco are all cases in point.³ DTOs have also become

1 An estimated 47,515 people have died in Mexico drug-related violence since 2006. See "Mexico Drug War Deaths over Five Years Now Total 47,515," BBC, January 12, 2012.

2 Brian Ross, Richard Esposito and Asa Eslocker, "Kidnapping Capital of USA," ABC News, February 11, 2009; Fred Burton and Scott Stewart, "The Long Arm of the Lawless," Stratfor, February 25, 2009; Randal Archibold, "Wave of Drug Violence Creeping into Arizona from Mexico, Officials Say," *New York Times*, February 23, 2009; David Danelo, "Space Invaders: Mexican Illegal Aliens and the US," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, October 29, 2008.

3 The Carrillo Fuentes group frequently uses Barrio Azteca to carry out contract killings in Texas and New Mexico. Another organization generating concern is the Mexican La Eme, which has expanded into the barrios of eastern Los Angeles where it works as a freelance debt

actively involved in the American people smuggling "business." It is now a common practice for cartels to assist migrants looking to enter the United States illegally on condition that they carry cocaine packs with them.⁴ Finally, there is some concern about a possible nexus emerging between the Mexican drug trade and terrorism. According to U.S. officials, Lebanese Hizb Allah has already secured a highly lucrative source of financing by helping to launder cocaine profits for groups such as the Los Zetas through a range of Shi'a-owned businesses in West Africa.⁵

This article provides brief background information on the seven DTOs that remain at the forefront of the cocaine trade in Mexico: the Gulf Cartel, Los Zetas, La Familia, the Sinaloa Cartel, the Beltran Leyva Organization, the Carrillo Fuentes Syndicate (Juarez Cartel), and the Arellano Felix Organization (Tijuana Cartel).

The Gulf Cartel

The Gulf Cartel is based out of Matamoros in Tamaulipas State, just across the border from Brownsville, Texas. The group's origins date back to bootlegging in the 1970s, with the move to cocaine trafficking occurring

collector and enforcer for cartels seeking to extend local market control. See, for instance, Jay Albanese, "Prison Break: Mexican Gang Moves Operations Outside US Jails," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, December 4, 2008; Adam Elkus, "Gangs, Terrorists and Trade," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, April 17, 2007; John P. Sullivan and Adam Elkus, "State of Siege: Mexico's Criminal Insurgency," *Small Wars Journal*, 2008; Clare Ribando, *Gangs in Central America* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2005).

4 Tim Padgett, "People Smugglers Inc.," *Time Magazine*, August 12, 2003; Heather MacDonald, "The Illegal-Alien Crime Wave," *City Journal*, Winter 2004; Jameson Taylor, "Illegal Immigration: Drugs, Gangs and Crime," Civitas Institute, November 2007; "National Drug Threat Assessment 2010," National Drug Intelligence Center, U.S. Department of Justice, February 2010.

5 Jo Becker, "Beirut Bank Seen as a Hub of Hezbollah's Financing," *New York Times*, December 13, 2011. Gunmen from Los Zetas were also alleged to have been involved in Iran's purported recent plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to Washington. If true, it is not unreasonable to assume that Hizb Allah acted as the go-between for the plan given its close relations with Tehran and suspected ties to the Mexican syndicate. For more on the supposed plot, see Charlie Savage and Scott Shane, "Iranians Accused of Plot to Kill Saudi's U.S. Envoy," *New York Times*, October 11, 2011.

during the 1980s and 1990s. For many years, the Gulf Cartel was considered the most powerful of the Mexican DTOs, enforcing its control through a highly feared paramilitary arm known as the Los Zetas. Since 2007, however, the prominence of the group has begun to wither, both as a result of the elimination of much of its leadership—including the syndicate's longtime godfather, Osiel Cardenas Guillen, and his brother, Antonio Ezequiel Cardenas Guillen⁶—and due to the defection of the Los Zetas in 2009, which now act as an independent organization. The group's current leader is Jorge Eduardo Costilla Sanchez ("El Coss") who is desperately

“According to U.S. officials, Lebanese Hizb Allah has already secured a highly lucrative source of financing by helping to launder cocaine profits for groups such as the Los Zetas through a range of Shi'a-owned businesses in West Africa.”

trying to prevent the Zetas from making in-roads into its northern Tamaulipas trafficking corridor, which runs between Matamoros and Nuevo Laredo on the Texan border.⁷ As part of this effort, the Gulf Cartel has developed and deployed "narco-tanks"—trucks fitted with air conditioning and steel plates that can only be breached with anti-tank grenades—to patrol its smuggling routes. Four of these vehicles were

6 Cardenas was arrested in 2003 but continued to run the Gulf Cartel from prison. He was extradited to the United States in January 2007.

7 Fred Burton and Stephen Meiners, "Mexico and the War Against the Drug Cartels in 2008," Stratfor, December 9, 2008; Sylvia Longmire, "Mexico's Drug War: TCO 101: The Gulf Cartel," www.borderviolenceanalysis.typepad.com, accessed December 12, 2011; George Grayson, "Mexico and the Drug Cartels," Foreign Policy Research Institute, August 2007; Jo Tuckman, "Body Count Mounts as Drug Cartels Battle Each Other – and the Police," *Guardian*, May 27, 2008; "5630 Execution Murders in 2008: Mexican Drug Cartels," Right Side News, January 1, 2009.

seized from a garage in Camargo in June 2011.⁸

Los Zetas

The Los Zetas were founded by former members of the Grupos Aeromoviles de Fuerzas Especiales (GAFE), an elite special forces unit that deserted from the Mexican military between 1996 and 2000.⁹ It acted as the paramilitary arm of the Gulf Cartel, but in 2009 it emerged as an increasingly significant DTO in its own right. The organization is currently competing with the Gulf Cartel for control over trafficking routes in Tamaulipas State, although it has also expanded its presence to Zacatecas, Veracruz, Tabasco, Campeche, the capital territory, Quintana Roo and Chiapas. The group has also worked with the Beltran Leyva Organization in an effort to extend influence into Ciudad Juarez—the locus of one of the main trafficking routes into the United States. Although the Los Zetas have been described as one of the most violent DTOs in Mexico, its ability to consolidate control over the country's northern border provinces has been curtailed by the arrest of several top commanders since 2008. Prominent in this regard are Mateo Lopez (“Comandante Mateo”), Efrain Teodoro Torres (“Z-14”), Daniel Perez (“El Cachetes”), Manuel Perez Izquierdo (“El Siete Latas”), Marco Garza de Leon Quiroga (“El Chabelo”) and Jaime Gonzalez Duran (“El Hummer”). The first five were all high-ranking members in the group's overall leadership structure, while the sixth was responsible for coordinating and overseeing cocaine imports from Central America.¹⁰ One

8 “Mexican Army Destroys Drug Cartel ‘Narco-Subs,’” BBC News, June 6, 2011.

9 According to Mexican authorities, as many as 1,000 members of GAFE have defected from the army since the late 1990s. Those critical to the formation of Los Zetas included Arturo Guzman Decena (“Z-1,” now dead), Maximino Ortiz, Víctor Hernandez Barron, Augustin Hernandez Martinez, Juan Carlos Tovar, Pedro Cervantes Marquez, Ramiro Rangel and Samuel Flores (all arrested).

10 George Grayson, “Los Zetas: The Ruthless Army Spawned by a Mexican Drug Cartel,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, May 2008; Oscar Becerra, “A to Z of Crime: Mexico's Zetas Expand Operations,” *Jane's Intelligence Review*, January 27, 2009; Burton and Meiners; Sullivan and Elkus; Tuckman; “Mexican Police Capture Regional Leader of Violent Drug Cartel,” *Latin American Herald Tribune*, June 6, 2011; “Zetas Drug-Cartel Boss’

of the group's founders and long-term leaders, Heriberto Lazcano (“El Lazca”), remains at large, along with his number two, Trevino Morales (“Z-40”).¹¹

La Familia

La Familia emerged as an independent group in 2006 with the purported dual aim of “defending citizens, merchants, businesses and farmers” from all forms of crime, and filling the security void left by the central government. Its founder, Nazario Moreno Gonzalez (“El Mas Loco,” or the “Craziest One”), required all members to carry a “spiritual manual” that contained references to pseudo-Christian aphorisms for self-improvement, which gave the organization overtones as a religious cult. Since its creation, however, La Familia has systematically morphed into a DTO, becoming especially notorious for what it refers to as “social work”—the ruthless execution (usually by beheading) of those who do not conform to the parameters of its self-defined “law enforcement” code. The group has a confirmed presence in 77 cities across the state of Michoacan (its main base), Queretaro, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Colima, Aguascalientes and Guerrero, as well as the Federal district.¹² Despite this wide geographic “footprint,” La Familia has suffered considerably from both leadership decapitations and desertions. In December 2010, its founder Gonzalez was killed during a shoot-out with security forces; this setback was followed six months later when his successor, Jose de Jesus Mendez Vargas (“El Chango,” or “The Monkey”), was captured in the city of Aguascalientes, roughly 265 miles southeast of Mexico City. Compounding the group's problems has been internal hemorrhaging, with growing numbers of members leaving to join a splinter group known as Caballeros Templarios (Knight's Templar). Enrique Plancarte Solis and Servando Gomez Martinez established the latter entity in March 2011 as an alternative vehicle for achieving “public justice,” and the

Captured in Mexico,” al-Jazira, October 17, 2011.

11 “Mexico Security Memo: A Zetas Challenge to the Mexican Government,” Stratfor, December 8, 2011.

12 Oscar Becerra, “Family Business: La Familia: Mexico's Most Violent Criminals,” *Jane's Intelligence Review*, October 7, 2009; George Grayson, “La Familia: Another Deadly Mexican Syndicate,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, February 2009.

group now poses a serious challenge to La Familia's continued organizational cohesion, if not existence.¹³

The Sinaloa Cartel

The Sinaloa Cartel was established as La Alizana de Sangre in the mid-1990s. After its founder, Hector Luis Palma Salazar (“El Guero”), was arrested in 1995, Joaquin Guzman (“El Chapo,” or “Shorty”) took control and remains the current leader. He is the most wanted drug lord in Mexico and is thought to have a personal fortune of \$1 billion.¹⁴ The Sinaloa Cartel controls most of the state by the same name and retains important bases in Baja California, Durango (where Guzman is believed to be hiding), Sonora, Jalisco and Chihuahua. The group is known to have

“Although the Sinaloa Cartel has witnessed the arrests of high-ranking members, it remains the most powerful and influential DTO in Mexico.”

established distribution cells across the United States, sending cocaine shipments via tunnels dug below the southern U.S. border. It is also thought to have set up additional Andean hubs to facilitate the transshipment of Peruvian and Colombian cocaine through West Africa to Europe. Although the Sinaloa Cartel has witnessed the arrests of high-ranking members, including the infamous Teodoro Garcia Simental (“El Teo,” who was behind much of the drug-related violence that plagued the border provinces in 2008 and 2009)¹⁵

13 Randal Archibold, “Mexican Police Arrest Leader of Crime Gang,” *New York Times*, June 22, 2011; Randal Archibold, “Politics Enables Mexican Fugitive To Defang Law,” *New York Times*, December 15, 2010; “Falling Kingpins, Rising Violence,” *Economist*, December 18, 2010; “A Leader of Mexico's Caballeros Templarios Arrested,” *Borderland Beat*, November 10, 2011; “Mexico Police Raid ‘La Familia Drug Cartel,’ Killing 11,” BBC News, May 28, 2001.

14 In 2009, *Forbes* included Guzman on its list of the world's richest men (701 out of 739).

15 Simental's trademark was to boil rivals and enemies in barrels of lye—a practice that became known as *pozole* after the name for Mexican stew.

and Ovidio Limon Sanchez (who managed Sinaloan cocaine movements bound for the American market), it remains the most powerful and influential DTO in Mexico.¹⁶ The group has been battling for control of two key trafficking routes that respectively abut New Mexico and California, each of which it is now thought to largely dominate: one in Ciudad Juarez, where it has been competing with the Carrillo Fuentes Syndicate, Beltran Leyva Organization—both former allies—and the Los Zetas; and one in Tijuana, which is also contested by the Arellano Felix Organization.¹⁷

The Beltran Leyva Organization

The Beltran Leyva Organization was largely the product of four brothers who were born in the state of Sinaloa in the 1960s: Marcus Arturo (“El Barbas”), Carlos (“El jefe de jefes”), Alfredo (“El Mochomo”) and Hector (“El Ingeniero”). The quartet was originally closely allied with the Sinaloa Cartel, but broke with the group in 2008 after Alfredo was arrested following an alleged Sinaloan betrayal. Initially, the organization proved capable of resisting competition from its parent syndicate as well as infiltrating counternarcotic units and assassinating some of their most senior officers.¹⁸ The Beltrons’ influence, however, has diminished due to the loss of some of its most prominent members. The first major setback occurred in December 2009 when its leader at the time, Arturo, was killed. This was followed by a string of apprehensions in 2010 that netted Carlos Beltran in January, Gerardo Alvarez-Vasquez (“El Indio”) in April, Edgar Valdez Villarreal (“La Barbie”) in August and Sergio Villarreal Barragan (“El Grande”) in

16 The U.S. intelligence community has gone further, describing the cartel as the “most powerful drug trafficking organization in the world.”

17 Burton and Meiners; Tuckman; Richard Marosi and Ken Ellingwood, “Mexican Drug Lord Teodoro Garcia Simental, Known for his Savagery, is Captured,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 13, 2010; Marc Lacey, “Top Mexican Drug Suspect Arrested,” *International Herald Tribune*, January 14, 2011; “Mexico Arrests High-Ranking Sinaloa Cartel Operator,” *Latin American Herald Tribune*, November 14, 2011; “US Intelligence Says Sinaloa Cartel Has Won the Battle for Ciudad Juarez Drug Routes,” CNS.com, April 9, 2010.

18 One of the most senior members killed by the Beltrons was Edgar Millan Gomez—the Federal Police director. He was assassinated in May 2008.

September. Another senior lieutenant, Oscar Osvaldo Garcia Montoya (“El Compayito”), was detained in April 2011.¹⁹ His capture has been described as eliminating the “last Beltran-Leyva link of any importance.”²⁰ This would appear to be an overstatement. The group has forged alliances of convenience with the Carrillo Fuentes Syndicate and the Los Zetas and continues to engage the Sinaloans for control of territory in Ciudad Juarez.²¹ It also retains at least a residual leadership structure that is overseen by Hector, one of the original founding brothers.

Carrillo Fuentes Syndicate (Juarez Cartel)

The Carrillo Fuentes Syndicate is based in the northern city of Ciudad Juarez in Chihuahua State, just across the border from El Paso, Texas. The organization is led by Vincente Carrillo Fuentes (“El Viceroy”),²² has a standing alliance with the Beltran Leyva Organization and is similarly fighting the Sinaloans for control of Juarez. It maintains a highly brutal enforcement wing known as La Linea that is composed of corrupt police officers. The unit’s long-time commander, Jose Antonio Acosta Hernandez (“El Diego”), was captured in August 2011. He has admitted to personally ordering 1,500 killings and is also thought to be the mastermind behind the 2010 killings of a U.S. Consulate employee, her husband and another worker at the U.S. mission in Ciudad Juarez.²³ At its height, the Carrillo Fuentes Syndicate was assumed to be responsible for about half of all the illegal drugs that pass

19 “Mexico Captures Brother of Slain Cartel Boss,” *New York Times*, January 3, 2010; “Alleged Top Drug Trafficker Caught Near Mexico City,” *USA Today*, April 22, 2010; Randall Archibold, “Mexican Police Arrest Man Believed to Be Drug Kingpin,” *New York Times*, August 31, 2010; “Mexico Arrests Suspected Drug Kingpin,” BBC News, September 12, 2011; “Falling Kingpins, Rising Violence”; “Mexico Arrests Trafficker Accused of 900 Murders,” *Daily Telegraph*, August 12, 2011.

20 Angelo Velasco, “Cae el líder de La Mano con Ojas; lo vinculan con 600 homicidios,” *Excelsior*, August 12, 2011.

21 See, for instance, Samuel Logan, “Beltran Leyvas Down But Not Out,” ISN Security Watch, January 8, 2010.

22 The United States has posted a \$5 million reward for information leading to the arrest or conviction of Vincente Carrillo Fuentes.

23 “Mexican Drug Cartel Enforcer Who ‘Ordered’ 1500 Killings is Captured After US Tip Off,” *Mail Online*, August 1, 2011.

through Mexico to the United States by using a street gang, Barrio Azteca, to coordinate sales, distribution and, when necessary, contract killings in cities such as Austin, Dallas and El Paso.²⁴ According to some American sources, these activities earned the organization

“It is now a common practice for cartels to assist migrants looking to enter the United States illegally on condition that they carry cocaine packs with them.”

as much as \$200 million per week.²⁵ Although the syndicate’s control over trafficking routes through Chihuahua has been significantly dented by Sinaloan competition, it continues to be an important player in the overall Mexican drug scene. The group’s members also retain a reputation for extreme violence; for example, they were implicated in the infamous Ciudad Juarez serial-murder site that was first reported in 2004 and which has since been dubbed the “House of Death.”²⁶

Arellano Felix Organization (Tijuana Cartel)

The Arellano Felix Organization, which operates primarily in the state of Baja California but also has an important presence in Zacatecas and Sinaloa, was at one time one of the largest and most violent DTOs in Mexico. It was initially organized around five brothers and four sisters who inherited the organization from Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo after he was arrested in 1989 for complicity in the murder of a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) official.²⁷ Four of

24 “Barrio Azteca Gang Behind Juarez Drug Violence,” *Drug Crime*, April 12, 2010; Marc Lacey and Ginger Thompson, “Drug Slayings in Mexico Rock U.S. Consulate,” *New York Times*, March 14, 2010; Marc Lacey, “Raids Aim to Find Killers of 3 in Mexico,” *New York Times*, March 18, 2010.

25 Howard La Franchi, “A Look Inside a Giant Drug Cartel,” *Christian Science Monitor*, December 6, 1999.

26 David Rose, “House of Death,” *Observer*, December 3, 2006; Alfredo Corchado, “‘Drug Wars’ Long Shadow,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 13, 2008; Radley Balko, “The House of Death,” *Reason*, September 30, 2008.

27 Tim Steller, “Mexican Drug Runners May Have Used

the main siblings as well as other senior lieutenants have since been arrested or killed, including Benjamin Arellano Felix (the cartel's principal drug lord), Eduardo Arellano Felix, Ramon Eduardo Arellano Felix, Francisco Javier Arellano Felix, Francisco Sillas Rocha and Armado Villareal Heredia.²⁸ These losses have dramatically curtailed the organization's penetration and reach, with competitors such as the Sinaloans increasingly muscling into its home turf and taking control over some of its key smuggling routes.²⁹ That said, the cartel continues to operate in Baja California, retains a presence, albeit a declining one, in 15 other states and still controls important street-level trafficking cells in the United States. The current leader is thought to be Luis Fernando Sanchez, the nephew of Enedina Arellano Felix (one of the sisters who originally inherited the cartel from Gallardo).³⁰ He reportedly works closely with Edgardo Leyva Escandon, a trained sniper who has been tied to the assassinations of several drug kingpins and who is also wanted on weapons and ammunition smuggling charges. The United States has posted rewards of \$2 million apiece for information leading to the arrests or convictions of the two men.³¹

Conclusion

These seven organizations can essentially be split into two main competing blocs: the Sinaloa Cartel, the Gulf Cartel and La Familia, which formed a cooperative union known as

C-130 from Arizona," *Arizona Daily Star*, April 15, 1998.

²⁸ The fifth Felix brother, Francisco Rafeel, was arrested in 1993 and after serving a 10-year sentence was extradited to the United States; he was released from prison in El Paso on February 2, 2008 and returned to Ciudad Juarez. There are two other brothers, Carlos Alberto and Luis Fernando, neither of whom are wanted by the authorities.

²⁹ See, for instance, Elizabeth Diaz, "Analysis: Mexico's Tijuana Cartel Weaker as Ex-Boss Comes Home," Reuters, March 14, 2008; Tuckman, "Mexican Drug Lord Is Arrested," Reuters, October 26, 2008; "Mexico Seizes Top Drug Suspect," BBC News, October 27, 2008.

³⁰ "New Arellano Félix Cartel Leaders," Justice In Mexico Project, December 4, 2010; "Mexico Seizes Top Drug Suspect." Enedina is also suspected of playing a role in the cartel's current activities and as a businesswoman has allegedly facilitated its money laundering operations.

³¹ "Edgardo Leyva Escandon," *NarcoticNews.com*, accessed December 13, 2011; Anna Cearley, "DEA Man Seeking Man Linked to Arellano Boat," *San Diego Tribune*, September 6, 2006.

the New Federation in February 2010; and a loose pattern of shifting coalitions among the remaining four syndicates. This alliance structure appears to have some longevity built into it, given bonds of beneficial business relationships and, just as importantly, vendettas and unpaid blood debts.

Given ongoing demand for cocaine in North America and Western Europe, pervasive corruption in Mexico and the enormous profits that can be made from the illegal drug trade, the problems associated with DTO competition and violence south of the U.S. border are unlikely to disappear anytime soon. While alliances may fluctuate—and despite the loss of several prominent narco "kingpins"—there is no indication that any of the seven organizations are about to collapse, disband or voluntarily cease their activity. This has serious implications for the United States, which remains the world's number one consumer of Andean-sourced narcotics.

Thus far, the United States has tended to emphasize supply interdiction in its overall counternarcotics efforts. This policy has clearly not worked, which is reflected by the endemic instability that now besets Mexico—the corridor for roughly 95% of the cocaine flowing out of Colombia, Bolivia and Peru. In looking to the future, it is evident that the United States will need to develop a more balanced approach that both bolsters support to the Calderon government while simultaneously addressing the demand-side—that is, the American side—of the drug equation.

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Bioterrorism: Still a Threat to the United States

By Leonard A. Cole

THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY of the 9/11 attacks prompted reflections on the current status of the terrorism threat to the United States. One aspect of an assessment—the threat posed by biological weapons—is especially challenging because of the unique character of these weapons. A prime distinction is the fact that exposure to minute quantities of a biological agent may go unnoticed, yet ultimately be the cause of disease and death. The incubation period of a microbial agent can be days or weeks; unlike a bombing, knifing, or chemical dispersion, a bioattack might not be recognized until long after the agent's release. Accordingly, bioterrorism poses distinctive challenges for preparedness, protection, and response.

The use of a pathogen for hostile purposes became a consuming concern to the American people soon after 9/11. About a half-dozen letters containing anthrax spores were mailed to journalists and politicians beginning one week after the jetliner attacks. Four letters with spores and threat messages eventually were recovered. All were postmarked Trenton, New Jersey, which meant that they had been processed at the postal distribution center in nearby Hamilton. Two letters were postmarked September 18, one addressed to Tom Brokaw at NBC-TV and another to the editor of the *New York Post*. The other two letters were stamped October 9 and addressed to Senators Thomas Daschle and Patrick Leahy.

As people became infected in September, October and November, local responses revealed gaps in preparedness for a biological attack. For example, the first confirmation of an anthrax case was on October 4, more than two weeks after the initial letters were mailed. Retrospective assessments later indicated that by then nine people had already contracted the disease. Their illness previously had been misidentified because of faulty diagnoses or erroneous laboratory tests.¹

¹ Leonard A. Cole, *The Anthrax Letters: A Bioterrorism*

In the end, at least 22 people had become infected, five of whom died. Meanwhile, scores of buildings were belatedly found to be contaminated with spores that had leaked from the letters. At least 30,000 people who were deemed at risk required prophylactic antibiotics.² Millions more were fearful, many of them anxious about opening their own mail.

Since the anthrax attacks, the U.S. government has spent about \$60 billion on biodefense. A large portion of those dollars has gone to biodefense research under the auspices of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). The NIAID budget for biodefense research has grown from \$200 million in 2001 to an annual average of \$1.6 billion since 2004.

As a result, two central questions have emerged after 10 years of efforts. Is the United States safer from a bioattack now than at the time of the anthrax attacks? Has the spending been worth it?

Key Questions, Discrepant Answers

Opinions on these questions differ. While concerned about the danger of backsliding, the authors of an article in *Politico* now felt “reassured about our preparedness” for a biological attack.³ At the same time, an opposing assessment was emblazoned in the title of a *New York Times Magazine* cover story: “Ten Years After the Anthrax Attacks, We Are Still Not Ready.”⁴ A review of biodefense efforts during the past 10 years in *Science* magazine blandly acknowledged the obvious: “debate continues over how much safer the country is.”⁵

The congressionally chartered Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism (WMD Commission) issued a report card in

Expert Investigates the Attacks That Shocked America (New York: Skyhorse Publications, 2009).

2 Daniel B. Jernigan, Pratima L. Raghunathan, Beth P. Bell et al., “Investigation of Bioterrorism-Related Anthrax, United States, 2001: Epidemiologic Findings,” *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 8:10 (2002).

3 Jonathan Moreno and Tom Daschle, “Anthrax Attacks: 10 Years Later,” *Politico*, October 15, 2011.

4 Wil S. Hilton, “Ten Years After the Anthrax Attacks, We Are Still Not Ready,” *New York Times Magazine*, October 30, 2011.

5 Jocelyn Kaiser, “Taking Stock of the Biodefense Boom,” *Science* 333:6047 (2011).

2010 on efforts to address several of its previous recommendations. The administration’s failure to “enhance the nation’s capabilities for rapid response to prevent biological attacks from inflicting mass casualties” merited a grade of “F” (meaning that no action was taken on this recommendation). Almost as bad was the “D+” given for continuing inadequate oversight of high-containment laboratories.⁶

Reasonable arguments can be made to support varied views about these issues, and all conclusions bear a degree of subjectivity. Yet an assessment of several broad critical contentions can offer clarification. The criticisms are largely expressed in the form of five contentions.

Contention #1: Funding for biodefense has meant fewer dollars for other deserving areas such as public health infrastructure and basic science research.

In 2005, 758 microbiologists signed a letter to Elias Zerhouni, then director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), objecting to the diversion of funds from public health research to biodefense projects. Zerhouni, joined by NIAID Director Anthony Fauci, rejected the letter’s premise of “diversion.” An assessment of disputed interpretations suggested that spending on biodefense benefited non-biodefense research as well, but the numbers were so “convoluted” that a clear determination was elusive.⁷

An analysis of the biodefense budget for fiscal year 2012 indicates that only 10% of the proposed \$6.4 billion is dedicated exclusively to civilian biodefense. The other 90% is for projects with both biodefense and non-biodefense implications. The non-biodefense goals, according to analysts Crystal Franco and Tara Kirk Sell, include “advancing other areas of science, public health, healthcare, national security, or international security.”⁸ This tilt toward

6 Bob Graham and Jim Talent, “Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism Report Card,” Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism, January 2010.

7 Jocelyn Kaiser, “Détente Declared on NIH Biodefense Funding,” *Science* 308:5724 (2005).

8 Crystal Franco and Tara Kirk Sell, “Federal Agency Biodefense Funding, FY2011-FY2012,” *Biosecurity and Bioterrorism* 9:2 (2011).

dual-track benefits has been reflected in past budgets as well. A report in *Nature* magazine indicated that of the \$60 billion spent on biodefense in the past decade, only about \$12 billion went for programs solely concerned with biodefense.⁹ Therefore, non-biodefense research seems to have benefited substantially from biodefense projects.

Fiscal woes in recent years have in fact resulted in reduced resources for public health and related programs. Economic pressure threatens to shrink biodefense funding as it does funding for much else in the federal budget; however, it is not clear now, nor was it in the past, if fewer dollars for biodefense would necessarily translate into more for public health, basic research, or any other health-related programs.

Contention #2: The growing number of facilities for research on select agents (specified pathogens and toxins) has heightened chances of an accidental release.

Statistics alone make this assertion unassailable. The chances of something going wrong in any enterprise, assuming no change in operational security, increase with the size of the enterprise. As the number of research facilities increases, so does the chance of an accident. A continuing weakness is the lack of clarity about the number of high security laboratories.

In 1983, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) designated four levels of safety for laboratory work with biological agents. A Biosafety Level-1 (BSL-1) laboratory allows for work on relatively innocuous agents and a BSL-4 laboratory on the most dangerous. The two highest containment facilities, BSL-3 and BSL-4, require special security measures including restricted access, negative pressure to prevent air from flowing out of the room, and protective outerwear for operators. BSL-4 laboratories require additional safeguards such as entry through multiple air-locked rooms and positive pressure outerwear with a segregated air supply.

9 Erika Check Hayden, “Biodefense Since 9/11: The Price of Protection,” *Nature* 477:150-152 (2011).

A BSL-4 laboratory is required for work on agents that cause lethal disease for which there is little or no treatment (for example, smallpox and hemorrhagic fevers such as Ebola and Marburg). At present, there are 15 such U.S. facilities planned or in operation, triple the number operating in 2001.¹⁰ Other dangerous agents, including the

“Although these actions would be welcomed, determining if a laboratory, or the country, is secure ‘enough’ will always be debatable. Security can never be absolute insofar as human enterprises are inevitably subject to accidents, miscalculation, and incomplete information.”

bacteria that cause anthrax and plague, are worked on in BSL-3 laboratories. The number of these laboratories has skyrocketed since 2001, although the actual figures are uncertain.

While an estimated 20 BSL-3 facilities were operating before the anthrax attacks, in the decade since the number has grown to between 200 and an astonishing 1,400 or more.¹¹ The huge discrepancy is attributable in part to varied methods of calculation. Some assessments have counted all BSL-3 laboratories in an institution as a single BSL-3 facility, while others have designated each laboratory as a separate entity. Furthermore, some laboratories with a BSL-3 designation may lack safety features found in others, such as double doors and a requirement that two persons must be present.

¹⁰ Keith Rhodes, “Testimony before the House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations,” October 4, 2007.

¹¹ Hugh Auchincloss, “Testimony before the House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations,” October 4, 2007.

No national authority is now empowered to mandate a single system of counting or enforce standardization for laboratory security. This lapse is magnified by the fact that even the lowest estimated number of BSL-3 laboratories (200) represents a 10-fold increase in the past 10 years, and that safety precautions at some BSL-3 facilities are less rigorous than at others.

Contention #3: The growing number of investigators with knowledge about select agents has increased the chances that an unsavory scientist could launch a bioattack.

Along with more high containment facilities has come more scientists who handle select agents. Concern about dangerous individuals among them was heightened in 2008 when the FBI named Bruce Ivins as the perpetrator of the 2001 anthrax attacks. Ivins was a veteran scientist who for decades had worked on anthrax at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) in Fort Detrick, Maryland. Before charges could be brought he committed suicide, so his guilt or innocence could never be established in a court of law. Still, evidence of his aberrational behavior, including alcoholism, depression, and self-described bouts of paranoia, evidently went unnoticed by his superiors.

The Ivins case highlighted questions about the screening of workers with ready access to select agents. The number of those workers just prior to the anthrax attacks has been estimated at about 700. By 2008, however, the figure had climbed to more than 14,000.¹² As some have suggested, the greater numbers mean that “the odds of one of them turning out to be a bad apple has increased.”¹³ Ironically, Ivins was not a newly minted investigator, but a long-respected figure in the army’s biodefense program.

Days after Ivins’ death, a USAMRIID spokesperson acknowledged that officials may have been unaware of his problems because they relied in part

¹² Gigi Kwik Gronvall, “Improving the Select Agent Program,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, October 29, 2008.

¹³ Marcus Stern, “Biodefense Program Poses Its Own Risks,” *ProPublica*, December 5, 2008.

on self-reporting.¹⁴ In 2011, a mental health review panel concluded that “Dr. Ivins had a significant and lengthy history of psychological disturbance and diagnosable mental illness at the time he began working for USAMRIID in 1980.”¹⁵

The Ivins case has raised concerns that other troubled or nefarious individuals might be working in U.S. laboratories. A recent government-sponsored forum on biosecurity called for periodic behavioral evaluations of personnel with access to select agents that include drug testing, searches for criminal history, and completion by selectees of a security questionnaire.¹⁶

Even while acknowledging the necessity of security measures, the right to privacy and freedom of scientific inquiry must be respected to the extent possible. In any case, behavioral monitoring can never provide absolute protection against the acts of a clever miscreant.

Contention #4: Money for biodefense has been misapplied or otherwise failed to produce desired results.

Project BioShield was established by congress in 2004 to acquire medical countermeasures against biological, chemical, and radiological agents. The 10-year, \$5.6-billion program provided for stockpiling and distributing vaccines and other drugs that have not necessarily been tested for efficacy on humans. (Exposing people to pathogens such as smallpox or anthrax to test a drug would be unethical.)

The first BioShield contract, for \$877 million, was awarded in 2004 for the production of a new anthrax vaccine. The recipient, VaxGen, a small California biotech company, had not previously made a successful vaccine or drug; in fact, the year before, the company’s planned HIV/AIDS

¹⁴ Eric Lichtblau and Eric Lipton, “Judge Says F.B.I. Can Examine Library Computers That Scientist Used Last Month,” *New York Times*, August 7, 2008.

¹⁵ David Dishneau, “Clues Were Missed in Anthrax Case, Panel Says,” Associated Press, March 24, 2011.

¹⁶ Edward You, “Addressing Biosecurity: Roles and Responsibilities of the Science and Security Communities,” Select Agent Program Workshop, U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services, University of Tennessee, November 16, 2011.

vaccine had proved ineffective and was abandoned. By the end of 2006, its anthrax program was also failing. After trial deadlines went unmet because of the vaccine's instability, the Department of Health and Human Services terminated the contract.¹⁷ The company received little of the BioShield allocation, although it had already been given nearly \$100 million from the NIH for the anthrax project.

What went wrong? At the outset, critics questioned whether any small company could quickly produce large quantities of vaccine—75 million doses—as stipulated in the contract. Further, VaxGen's lack of success in the past could hardly have been a recommendation for a big contract for a new vaccine. The government's haste to show progress soon after the establishment of BioShield led it to take a big risk. Beyond the loss of time and money, the VaxGen failure was a public embarrassment. It became a symbol of ineptness early in the new program.

Other biosecurity programs have also drawn criticism, including a \$534 billion surveillance project called BioWatch. This program included the placement of air samplers for detection of anthrax spores and other agents in more than 30 major U.S. cities. A committee convened by the National Academy of Sciences concluded in 2010 that the program was faced with "serious technical and operational challenges." Others flatly criticized its funding as wasted.¹⁸

Despite the criticisms, biodefense spending has also brought benefits. It has advanced understanding of how the immune system responds to viral vectors that are used to target cells. It helped fund reconstruction of the Spanish flu virus that killed tens of millions in 1918-1919. It has funded the Strategic National Stockpile, which within hours could provide supplies to a site of terrorism or disaster anywhere in the United States. (The stockpile includes antibiotics, vaccines, and other materials to cope with terrorist or other disaster events.)

17 Eric Lipton, "U.S. Cancels Order for 75 Million Doses of Anthrax Vaccine," *New York Times*, December 20, 2006.

18 Hayden.

Contention #5: The threat of bioterrorism has been exaggerated and does not warrant expanded support.

A 2011 assessment in *Science* magazine of the "biodefense boom" noted that critics questioned its justification, "especially because no new attacks have occurred."¹⁹ If the validity of a threat depends primarily on when it was last actualized, the threat of a nuclear attack would be deemed negligible. After all, the last (and only) use of a nuclear weapon occurred nearly 70 years ago

"Descriptions of possible bioterrorism scenarios are often hyperbolic, but they contain enough substance to warrant thoughtful programs for preparedness."

when the United States dropped two atomic bombs on Japan to end World War II. Iran's current quest for nuclear arms, and the West's alarmed reaction, demonstrates the thinness of the "when-last-used" prescription.

Yet even disregarding recency of occurrence, alleged exaggeration of the biothreat remains an issue. William Clark, a professor and chair emeritus of immunology at UCLA, has written that: "It is almost inconceivable that any terrorist organization we know of [could develop] a bioweapon capable of causing mass casualties on American soil."²⁰ Others have stated, more cynically, that the threat of bioterrorism "has been systematically and deliberately exaggerated."²¹

The WMD Commission holds a contrary view. After interviewing more than 250 government officials and non-governmental experts, the commission issued a report in December 2008. Its

19 Kaiser, "Taking Stock of the Biodefense Boom."

20 "Is the Threat of Bioterrorism Exaggerated?" *Homeland Security Newswire*, May 23, 2008.

21 Ben Bain and Joseph Cirincione, "Exaggerating the Threat of Bioterrorism," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, March 16, 2006; Milton Leitenberg, "Bioterrorism, Hyped," *Los Angeles Times*, February 17, 2006.

chilling conclusion found that a weapon of mass destruction will probably be used in a terrorist attack within five years, and that weapon will likely be a biological agent.²² Despite skepticism by some about the commission's calculation, it nonetheless highlighted the particular concern afforded to the biological threat.

The commission's conclusion was influenced by the low cost of the 2001 anthrax attacks, the ease with which they were launched (via the mail), the fact that al-Qa`ida and other terrorist groups have sought to develop biological weapons, and the rapid advances in biotechnology that could be used to develop new and more deadly biological weapons.

In disputing the commission's judgments, a group of scientists at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation contended that the commission's threat assessments were speculative and relied on unjustified assumptions.²³ Yet the tide of concern about bioterrorism remains high, as reflected in U.S. funding levels and statements of support by numerous government officials.

Descriptions of possible bioterrorism scenarios are often hyperbolic, but they contain enough substance to warrant thoughtful programs for preparedness.

Conclusion

Despite missteps, the U.S. biodefense effort has resulted in substantial advances in understanding the biothreat, development and placement of new detection technologies, and expanded provision of countermeasures. The increased number of high security laboratories and their additional personnel do pose potential risks. Still, claims that these expansions have made the United States less safe overall seem overwrought. Moreover, recent measures to address security deficiencies, although belated, have helped mitigate them.

22 Bob Graham and Jim Talent, *World At Risk, The Report of the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008).

23 "Biological Threats: A Matter of Balance," *The Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation*, 2009.

Enactment of pending legislation to implement recommendations of the WMD Commission would further rationalize the nation's biosecurity. The Weapons of Mass Destruction Prevention and Preparedness Act of 2009 would heighten laboratory security, provide for establishing uniform standards for handling select agents, and designate a single coordinator to oversee select agent programs.

Although these actions would be welcomed, determining if a laboratory, or the country, is secure "enough" will always be debatable. Security can never be absolute insofar as human enterprises are inevitably subject to accidents, miscalculation, and incomplete information.

To return to the two questions posed earlier about whether the United States is safer from a bioattack, and whether the spending has been worth it: the answer to the first question is yes, although with gaps yet to be filled; as for the second question, the results of research cannot be certain in advance, and expecting every dollar to produce a favorable result is unrealistic. Several investments in biosecurity have clearly provided benefits. Yet millions of dollars have undeniably been wasted on duplicated or ill-chosen projects, a condition that should be acknowledged and remediated.

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Radicalization Processes in Afghanistan

By Marisa L. Porges

IN APRIL 2011, a series of violent protests erupted in Afghanistan that reflected public anger over news of an American preacher burning a Qur'an. The United Nations compound in normally peaceful Mazar-i-Sharif, north of Kabul, was attacked, and seven foreigners were killed.¹ Riots also struck Kandahar, the second largest city in Afghanistan, with more than 100 protesters shot and at least a dozen killed.² While many demonstrators were reportedly just expressing dismay at the Qur'an burning, Afghan officials stressed that Taliban and Hizb-i-Islami played a role as well; in their view, these radical groups "misus[ed]" the emotions of locals to spark the violence.³ Regardless, the riots surprised many Afghan observers and international officials, and raised significant questions about the general state of the Afghan people. Were societal tensions and malcontent, which normally simmered just under the surface, starting to bubble over? Were these riots an early indication that radicalization was becoming widespread in Afghan civil society?

Although mass radicalization does not currently appear to be a pervasive threat in Afghanistan, the key drivers of radicalization—namely, common grievances, extremist ideology, and mechanisms for mobilization⁴—are prevalent. This, in and of itself, is cause for concern. An environment prone to enabling radicalization means that the Taliban and other militant groups remain capable of recruiting supporters, and that widening fissures within the Afghan political landscape could more easily lead to future

violence. It also raises concerns for U.S. and NATO transition plans, which could be undermined by spreading radicalization, and highlights future threats to stability within Afghan civil society.

Grievances

While there is insufficient evidence to indicate that widespread radicalization is occurring in Afghanistan, large segments of Afghan society remain frustrated by physical insecurity, government corruption, poverty and growing social inequality. These frustrations are easily manipulated by radical groups and make many Afghans susceptible to recruitment and radicalization, particularly when their discontent is aggravated by mistrust of the government or the international community.

Insecurity remains the core grievance across the country. Although nearly half of the Afghans surveyed in the 2011 Asia Foundation poll felt the country was moving in the right direction, 56% of respondents still feared for their personal safety. Nearly 40% identified insecurity—to include "attacks, violence, and terrorism"—as the country's biggest problem.⁵ Unemployment, corruption, and poverty were likewise cited as serious concerns. Recent studies by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Afghan entities echo these findings but stress that corruption—ranging from bribery and nepotism to the misuse of aid money and the abuse of government positions—was another overwhelming source of anger and frustration.⁶ Corruption was described as the identifying feature of government services in multiple provinces, leading to widespread mistrust in the Afghan government and its approach to the rule of law. Lack of access to social services and higher education, growing social inequality, civilian casualties caused by international military forces, and the destabilizing influence of Pakistan were also highlighted as the most serious, unaddressed grievances of many Afghans.

1 Laura King, "Fury in Afghanistan Over Koran-Burning Continues as Protests Leave Nine Dead," *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 2011.

2 Rod Nordland, "Taliban Exploit Tensions Seething in Afghan Society," *New York Times*, April 6, 2011.

3 "Afghan Police Criticised Over Mazar-e Sharif Violence," Institute for War and Peace Reporting, April 14, 2011.

4 For further explanation of how these three risk factors were identified as the key drivers of radicalization, see Peter Neumann, "Preventing Violent Radicalization in America," Bipartisan Policy Center Report, June 2011.

5 "Afghanistan in 2011: A Survey of the People," The Asia Foundation, November 2011.

6 Findings presented at workshop on radicalization in Afghan society, Kabul, Afghanistan, October 2011.

These frustrations, in and of themselves, may not directly lead to violent extremism. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that they often provide the foundation for radicalization in Afghanistan, particularly for segments of society still under the Taliban's influence. Stories of young Afghans joining the insurgency are peppered with references to unaddressed grievances. Their narratives include a combination of anger at real or perceived violations of their rights by international forces (for example, civilian casualties from

“Religious rhetoric is critically important to the radicalization process. It is threaded throughout Taliban messaging and recruitment campaigns, framing aforementioned central grievances within the context of Islamic law and manipulating local frustrations and religious beliefs to support violent action.”

military operations, night raids, and U.S. or ISAF detention operations), the failure of the Afghan government to tackle corruption or provide security, justice and jobs, or those in combination with national pride and a desire for revenge. In one example, Abdul Haqim, a 25-year-old Afghan Taliban sub-district commander, described joining the insurgency as a process that started with resentment of coalition forces and the Afghan government, and culminated when American soldiers killed his cousin.⁷ Another story illustrates how an Afghan prisoner in Pol-e-Charki prison, the large prison just east of Kabul where the Taliban have long maintained a strong influence, was radicalized after fellow inmates helped him translate

personal frustration at the government's corrupt justice system into pro-Taliban sentiments.⁸

Left unaddressed, these frustrations create the framework within which transnational terrorist groups, the Taliban, and other domestic political actors manipulate radical ideologies and ethnonational divisions to gain popular support. Insurgent propaganda is effectively tailored toward this purpose, with a focus on misgivings toward the Afghan government and its perceived failure to provide governance and security. In this context, arguments about the benefits of Taliban governance and justice find greater appeal. Insurgent groups are thus able to rationalize violence in pursuit of their goals while also undermining public support for the government or international community.

Furthermore, decades of conflict and divisive domestic politics have left Afghan society polarized and ethnically fractured. Aforementioned grievances exacerbate these problems of factionalized politics and provide the basis for further entrenchment of ethnic and political divisions within Afghan civil society. Ultimately, this raises concerns for potential future political violence or, in the bleakest outlook, foreshadows post-transition civil war.

Ideology

Although individual stories of motivation and recruitment in Afghanistan vary, religious narrative is considered “the key that unlocks the ability to use radical tactics.”⁹ As a result, religious rhetoric is critically important to the radicalization process. It is threaded throughout Taliban messaging and recruitment campaigns, framing aforementioned central grievances within the context of Islamic law and manipulating local frustrations and religious beliefs to support violent action.

Since there is no singular path for radicalization, questions remain about the degree to which ideology is a primary motivational factor in

Taliban or insurgent recruitment, or a secondary tool used to justify violence after becoming a combatant. Senator Mawlawi Arsala Rahmani, the Taliban's former minister of education, considers it a core premise of today's insurgent radicalization. As he explained in a recent interview, more than ever “it's a war [based on] one ideology.”¹⁰ In his view, religious rhetoric has become the starting point for joining Afghan-oriented radical groups. A slightly different perspective is offered by a 2009 Department of International Development (DFID) study, which found that the religious radicalization of many young combatants occurred once they joined the insurgency; training and indoctrination included religious messaging to frame their cause in terms of Islam.¹¹ Other insurgents discussed their actions—and the process that led them to join the Taliban—without mentioning religion. In the end, multiple factors can determine whether religion is a deep ideological foundation, a tool to appeal to grievances, or merely window dressing—the age and personal experience of a combatant, and their mechanisms of mobilization, among other reasons.

Regardless, religious leaders and religious institutions remain pivotal elements of the radicalization process in Afghanistan. While approximately 3,325 mosques were registered with the Afghan government as of May 2011, its Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs estimated that there may be as many as 60,000 unregistered mosques.¹² These religious institutions are central to daily life for most Afghans and ensure that the “foundation of [public] debate is religious issues.”¹³ Mullahs and imams are likewise essential; they often represent the primary religious educator and religious preacher, and also the community's moral authority and most trusted adviser. Despite recent efforts

¹⁰ Personal interview, Mawlawi Arsala Rahmani, Kabul, Afghanistan, November 2011.

¹¹ Sarah Ladbury and Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU), *Testing Hypothesis on Radicalisation in Afghanistan* (Kabul: Department for International Development, 2009).

¹² Brief by senior Afghan official from Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs, Kabul, Afghanistan, May 2011.

¹³ Brief by senior Afghan representative from Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, Kabul, Afghanistan, May 2011.

⁷ He said he was “burning with rage.” See Miles Amooore, “Defecting in the Name of Love,” *Afghan Scene*, March 2011.

⁸ Personal interview, family member of Afghan prisoner, Kabul, Afghanistan, October 2011.

⁹ Personal interview, ISAF official, Kabul, Afghanistan, November 2011.

by the Afghan government to develop a unified curriculum for training mullahs, Afghan religious leaders espouse a variety of ideologies, and their levels of education vary widely—some having little higher education and many having received training in unmonitored Pakistani *madrasas*.

The role played by Pakistani *madrasas* is significant for both mullahs and the wider Afghan public. Given Afghanistan's weak government-run religious education system and the well-developed and locally-respected *madrasa* system in neighboring Pakistan, large segments of Afghans are schooled there.¹⁴ While figures are elusive, it is estimated that more than 1.5 million children attend Pakistani *madrasas*, many of whom are Afghan citizens, including thousands of Afghan refugees. Although many of these *madrasas* do not teach radical rhetoric or serve as sources for militant recruitment or training,¹⁵ they nonetheless have sizeable influence on the ideological aspect of Afghan-based radicalization. In a 2010 assessment, the U.S. Department of State asserted that “a small, yet influential number of madrassas have taught extremist doctrine in support of terrorism.”¹⁶ These *madrasas* include those at Shamshatoo, an Afghan refugee camp near Peshawar where followers of notorious insurgent leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar use “hard-sell recruitment” tactics in Afghan schoolboys.¹⁷ The growing influence of conservative Deobandi scholars in Kabul, Logar, Parwan and Wardak is also sourced to Pakistani *madrasas* and has made these areas critical for insurgent support and

recruitment.¹⁸ While many graduates do not become radicalized, the potential impact is clear.

Mechanisms

Considering the process of radicalization from multiple perspectives helps highlight the key tools and methods used to radicalize Afghans, and draws attention to many common settings in which radicalization occurs. It also demonstrates that, despite years of insurgent recruitment and mobilization, many of these mechanisms have remained unchanged over the recent past.

In Afghanistan, basic tools for radicalization include night letters (*shabnamah*), inspirational songs and poems (*taranas*), and CDs and DVDs with sermons or battle reports. While magazines and print media are used sporadically, they are less effective for the illiterate Afghan audience; in many instances, this propaganda and internet-based messaging is actually aimed at an international audience.¹⁹ Another tool that has gained traction over the past year is cell phone and social media technology. The Taliban have increasingly spread their influence by sending propaganda that includes gruesome images to countless Afghan cell phones at once.²⁰ Insurgents' preference for using “spammed” SMS messages and images will likely continue to increase as more young Afghans acquire smart phones.

Other methods for recruitment leverage one of Afghan radical groups' core advantages: they innately understand their audience well and they often live and work among them, which allows the effective exploitation of social pressure points. They therefore use local power structures and face-to-face contact to recruit and radicalize through both persuasion and intimidation, two of

the most powerful tools available. In this way, they also coerce Afghans to withdraw support for coalition forces, with night letters being an oft-used scare tactic.²¹

Finally, it is critical to identify the primary target audiences of these efforts—particularly the youth, former combatants, refugees and prisoners who are most vulnerable to recruitment and radicalization. Many Afghans 25-years-old or younger are “disenfranchised, lack educational and employment opportunities, and rarely

“Another tool that has gained traction over the past year is cell phone and social media technology. The Taliban have increasingly spread their influence by sending propaganda that includes gruesome images to countless Afghan cell phones at once.”

participat[e] in [community] decision-making,”²² making them especially susceptible to grievance-oriented rhetoric exploiting societal unease and unhappiness with the government. Refugee camps near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border are also significant sites for insurgent radicalization and continue to supply low-level combatants to the battlefield.²³ Afghan prisoners are likewise a vulnerable group, especially in prisons like Pol-e-Charki, where Taliban leaders have maintained influence throughout the past decade. Understanding the more precarious situations of these particular populations helps clarify how radicalization occurs in the

14 As of June 2010, the Pakistani government reported that 19,104 *madrasas* were registered. For the sake of general comparison, there were 336 *madrasas* registered with the Afghan government in 2007. Note that, in 2010, the Afghan Ministry of Education sponsored 48 *madrasas* specifically to counter the Taliban's use of religious education as a recruitment and radicalization tool.

15 According to an International Crisis Group report from 2005, “A Pakistan government report issued in 1995 found the existence of 746 extremist madrassas in Punjab province alone; it is currently unclear how many madrassas in the region would be considered radical.”

16 In previous years, the U.S. Department of State worded this assessment more strongly, asserting that “many” *madrasas* taught extremist doctrine.

17 Ron Moreau, “The Jihadi High School,” *Newsweek*, April 24, 2011.

18 “The Insurgency in Afghanistan's Heartland,” International Crisis Group, June 27, 2011. Three of Pakistan's most famous Deobandi *madrasas*—Darul Uloom Haqqania, Darul Uloom Hashemia and Imdadul Uloom-e Sh-aria—taught prominently insurgents from Wardak and Logar provinces.

19 Personal interview, ISAF official, Kabul, Afghanistan, October 2011. Also see “Taliban Propaganda: Winning the War of Words?” International Crisis Group, July 24, 2008.

20 Spencer Ackerman, “Taliban Texts Terror to Afghan Phones,” *Wired*, March 17, 2011.

21 Personal interview, ISAF official, Kabul, Afghanistan, October 2011.

22 “Annual Project Report: Joint National Youth Programme,” United Nations Development Programme for Afghanistan, December 31, 2008.

23 “Recruitment and Radicalization of School-Aged Youth by International Terrorist Groups,” Homeland Security Institute, April 2009.

Afghan context while also highlighting pragmatic options for targeted counterradicalization efforts.

Next Steps

Despite the riots of last spring, there are few clear indications of widespread radicalization across Afghan society, although grievances, radical ideology, and readily available mobilization mechanisms are clearly pervasive. This raises concerns that the Taliban and other militant groups will continue to exert influence and that there may be violent outcomes to the political alienation and polarization growing within segments of Afghan society.

As Afghan, U.S., and NATO officials prepare for the forthcoming security transition, they should keep these factors in mind. Priority should be placed on stemming these drivers of radicalization, countering the influence they have on the Afghan people and on plans for post-transition stabilization efforts. In the near-term, efforts should focus on combating mechanisms for radicalization and supporting Afghan groups most vulnerable to radicalization. A comprehensive, long-term counterradicalization response should also involve continuing to address core, widespread grievances such as insecurity and corruption—with the Afghan government in the lead and the international community in a supporting role. Senior leaders, however, must be honest with the Afghan public that such grievance-oriented strategies will take years, if not decades, and success is not guaranteed. In the immediate future, the Afghan government and international community must support a frank discussion that acknowledges these grievances and their inability to fix them immediately. This could help release some tension in Afghan civil society and make particularly aggrieved Afghans less susceptible to radicalization.

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Individual Jihadist Operations in Europe: Patterns and Challenges

By Petter Nesser

RIGHT-WING, ANTI-ISLAM TERRORIST Anders Behring Breivik—the lone gunman who shot to death 69 people in Norway on July 22, 2011—wrote in his manifesto that lone acts of jihadist terrorism were a main source of his inspiration.¹ Breivik's writings on tactics are similar to theorizing on leaderless warfare by American white supremacists as well as by al-Qa`ida, mixing ideas from the two. Breivik's own manifesto echoed strategies, concepts and words found in the writings of Ku Klux Klan member Louis Beam, al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula's (AQAP) *Inspire* magazine and al-Qa`ida strategist Abu Mus`ab al-Suri's *Global Islamic Resistance Call*.²

There exists no definitional consensus regarding what constitutes a “lone wolf,” and it is often highly difficult to determine the extent to which individual terrorists operate on their own. Keeping such reservations in mind, existing research indicates that individual terrorists are found among a variety of ideological camps including right- and left-wing radicals, anarchists, Islamists, separatists and various single-issue movements. Moreover, individual attackers appear to have constituted a relatively marginal phenomenon, mostly confined to the United States, and many of them have been white racists.³ Studies have also pointed out how mentally disturbed people have been overrepresented among loners and that their operations typically involved firearms, explosives and soft civilian targets.⁴ Existing research has indicated systematic variation in the

profiles of individual attackers and their relationships to extremist networks.⁵

Due to the pressing security situation for jihadist networks in the form of steadfast counterterrorism operations targeting international terrorist cells and militant training camps, al-Qa`ida strategists have for several years called for local individual attacks by associates and sympathizers in the West. Although there has been an increase in terrorist plots by individuals in European countries since 2008, small cells composed of two or more people continue to dominate the picture.

This article first offers an overview and brief characterizations of terrorist plots in Western Europe that appeared to involve jihadist individuals operating on their own, before discussing possible explanations for why there have been relatively few such attacks in the region. In conclusion, the article addresses the potential for an increase in lone acts of terrorism by jihadists in European countries.

Cases and Patterns

Since 2003, the author has maintained an open source chronology of jihadist terrorist plots in Western Europe between 1995 and 2011. The chronology contains incidents involving concrete attack plans by suspects having some kind of connection to al-Qa`ida's networks and ideology. Out of a total of 96 cases (based on the latest count), approximately 10 cases were individual operations, but none of the terrorists seemed to be a “lone wolf” in a strict sense.⁶

Only one out of these 10 cases—the so-called “shoe bombers” attempts to destroy transatlantic airliners in 2001—appears to have been run by al-Qa`ida's central organization, but all seemed embedded in more or less organized radical environments having

1 Andrew Berwick, “2083 A European Declaration of Independence,” 2011, p. 919, available at www.ansa.it/documents/1311520015929_2083++A+European+Declaration+of+Independence.pdf.

2 Louis Beam, “Leaderless Resistance,” *Seditionist* 12 (1992); Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus'ab Al-Suri* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). Also see issues 1-7 of *Inspire*, available on various jihadist websites.

3 “Lone Wolf Terrorism,” Instituut voor Veiligheids- en Crisismanagement, July 6, 2007.

4 Ibid.

5 Raffaello Pantucci, “A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists,” International Centre for the Study of Radicalization, March 2011.

6 Petter Nesser, “Chronology of Jihadism in Western Europe 1994-2007: Planned, Prepared, and Executed Terrorist Attacks,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 3:10 (2008); Petter Nesser “Chronology of Jihadism in Western Europe Update 2008-2010,” Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, December 20, 2010.

some kind of link to al-Qa`ida's regional branches, networks of sympathizers and the organization's ideology. Furthermore, most plots involved people who were different from the average person, and the terrorists rarely managed to fully realize their attack intentions.

The first well-known, one-man-operation prepared from European soil was the aforementioned "shoe bomber" Richard Reid's attempt to destroy American Airlines Flight 63 from Paris to Miami in 2001. The plot appears

“There exists no definitional consensus regarding what constitutes a ‘lone wolf,’ and it is often highly difficult to determine the extent to which individual terrorists operate on their own.”

to have been hatched by al-Qa`ida's program for external operations under the leadership of Khalid Shaykh Muhammad and involved another solo-operative named Sajjid Badat, who had second thoughts and hid his bomb device under his bed instead.⁷ While first perceived as a loner, it turned out that Reid had an extensive network, receiving support from the Tunisian al-Qa`ida operative Nizar Trabelsi in Belgium and Pakistani militants based in Paris. Far from operating on his own, Reid was an integral part of al-Qa`ida's Europe networks and the 9/11 offensive.⁸

The second solo-event was the murder of Theo Van Gogh in Amsterdam by Mohammed Bouyeri. The Dutch-Moroccan prepared and executed the attack by himself, but was part of an extensive Netherlands-based network with links to militants in Pakistan, which planned assassinations of Dutch

politicians and bombings of state institutions. Bouyeri was resourceful and ideologically committed. He meticulously planned a simple but highly effective operation, hoping to die as a martyr "guns blazing" in a shootout with the police in a park close to the murder site.⁹

During 2008, there were two serious plots in the United Kingdom by mentally unstable youth. The "emo-kid," Andrew Ibrahim, was inspired by Londonistan preacher Abu Hamza al-Masri and fiercely enraged about injustices against Muslims in Palestine and Iraq. He prepared an HMTD-attack¹⁰ on a Bristol shopping center. Nicky Reilly, who suffered from Asperger's syndrome, appears to have been radicalized online by militants in Pakistan before attempting but failing to bomb a local cafe in Exeter.¹¹

In October 2009, a Libyan militant set off a nitrate-based explosive device at the gate of an Italian Army barracks in Milan, injuring a guard and himself. Several accomplices were arrested and police confiscated more explosives made from ammonium nitrate from among their belongings.¹² Also in October, Nigerian student Umar Farouk Abdulmuttallab attempted to blow up a plane from Amsterdam to Detroit with explosives hidden in his underwear. Highly resourceful, Abdulmuttallab was allegedly associated with extremists in the United Kingdom, a pupil of Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-`Awlaqi and attended a terrorist training camp in Yemen.¹³

Throughout 2010, there were at least five serious terrorist plots by individuals having obscure, yet significant ties to

militant organizations or extremist networks, three of them occurring in Scandinavia. In January, a Danish-Somali al-Shabab associate tried to murder cartoonist Kurt Westergaard in his home with an axe. A spokesman for the Somali group publicly hailed the attacker, but al-Shabab never took responsibility for the assassination attempt.¹⁴ In February, UK police arrested the Bengali British Airways worker Rajib Karim who plotted to plant explosives onboard U.S.-bound flights while maintaining contacts with AQAP-leader al-`Awlaqi via encrypted e-mails.¹⁵ In May, the female Pakistani student Roshonara Choudhry stabbed the UK Member of Parliament Stephen Timms, citing internet speeches by al-`Awlaqi in Yemen as inspiration. Choudhry was also inspired by a U.S.-based website called RevolutionMuslim.com, which called for assassinations of British MPs voting in favor of the Iraq war. This website in turn appears linked to the British extremist organization Islam4UK (formerly al-Muhajiroun), which would organize support demonstrations outside the court where Choudhry was tried.¹⁶ While Choudhry staunchly insisted she acted alone, it may be too early to definitively know whether she had connections to extremist networks. Then, in September, a one-legged Chechen-Belgian and former boxer injured himself while preparing a letter bomb to the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper inside a Copenhagen hotel. First believed to be a lone extremist, it later turned out that the Chechen was connected to al-Qa`ida-linked support networks centered in the German town of Bremen.¹⁷ Furthermore, just before Christmas an Iraqi-Swede with alleged connections to UK-based extremists and perhaps al-Qa`ida in Iraq launched a failed suicide operation on a main shopping street in Stockholm.¹⁸

9 In the author's opinion, this was the jihadist loner attack in Europe showing most parallels to the Norway attack of July 22, 2011. See Albert Benschop, "Chronicle of a Political Murder Foretold: Jihad in the Netherlands," University of Amsterdam, 2005.

10 HMTD stands for hexamethylene triperoxide diamine.

11 Duncan Gardham, "Terrorist Andrew Ibrahim was Turned in by the Muslim Community," *Telegraph*, July 18, 2009; Duncan Gardham, "Men Who Groomed Exeter Bomber Still on the Loose," *Telegraph*, January 31, 2009.

12 Pantucci.

13 "From Fresh-Faced Schoolboy to Jihad Warrior: Underpants Bomber Pictured in Al Qaeda Training Camp," *Daily Mail*, October 13, 2011.

14 "Jury Convicts Danish Cartoonist's Attacker," CNN, February 3, 2011.

15 Vikram Dodd, "British Airways Worker Rajib Karim Convicted of Terrorist Plot," *Guardian*, February 28, 2011.

16 Vikram Dodd and David Batty, "Islamist Website Urges Users to Target MPs," *Guardian*, November 5, 2011.

17 Sune Fischer, "Lors Doukaev tæt på terrornetværk," *Extra Bladet*, October 25, 2010.

18 "Doukaiev Met with German Extremists," Danmarks Radio, May 23, 2011; Magnus Ranstorp, "Terrorist

7 Sean O'Neill and Daniel McGrory, *The Suicide Factory, Abu Hamza and the Finsbury Park Mosque* (London: Harper Perennial, 2006).

8 Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir* (New York: Free Press, 2006).

During 2011, the author registered only one individual plot that seemed motivated by jihadism. In January, the young Kosovar Arid Uka shot and killed U.S. soldiers at Frankfurt airport, allegedly after watching a feature movie depicting American soldiers in Iraq raping a young girl. While investigations did not appear to reveal ties to known organizations, Uka was linked to extremists on social media sites and posted violent messages and threatening statements online.¹⁹

In addition to the aforementioned plots, there have been other incidents involving individuals on the fringes of extremist networks.

The Limits of Individualism

The big picture is that despite al-Qa`ida's continued, intensifying efforts to ignite leaderless jihad in the West as exemplified by the writings of Abu Mus`ab al-Suri, AQAP's *Inspire* magazine, and al-Sahab's recent production "la tukallafa illa nafsaka" ("no one is assigned but yourself"), very few jihadist terrorists in Europe were true loners.²⁰ On the contrary, investigations revealed that most of those believed to be acting alone turned out to be connected to others. There are multiple explanations for this.

First, research on serious plots in Europe has shown that the terrorists typically wanted to join "holy war" in Muslim countries as foreign fighters rather than blowing themselves up at home. In many cases, the terrorists became involved in European plots only after connecting with jihadists abroad who told them that they could be of more use as international terrorists than guerrilla fighters.²¹

Awakening in Sweden?" *CTC Sentinel* 4:1 (2011).

19 Isabelle de Pommereau, "Frankfurt Gunman in US Airmen Killing Kept Radical Company on Facebook," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 4, 2011.

20 For a good example on al-Qa`ida's media campaign calling for individual attacks, consult al-Sahab media: "You Are Held Responsible Only for Thyself," part 1 and 2, English transcript posted on Shibkat al-Jihad al-`Alimi, June 11, 2011.

21 Paul Cruickshank, "The Militant Pipeline Between the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border Region and the West," New America Foundation, 2010; Mitchell D. Silber, "Al-Qa`ida's Center of Gravity in a Post-Bin Ladin World," *CTC Sentinel* 4:11-12 (2011).

Second, jihadists seem to prefer to think of themselves in terms of a *jama`a* (group), *tanzim* (organization) or *baraka* (movement), and the process of connecting with groups, ideologues and training camps appears to be an important part of the radicalization and socialization of committed "holy warriors."²²

Third, while leaderless terrorism works well in theory, there are many practical obstacles.²³ Lone operations tend to demand a lot in terms of individual skill and personal abilities (discipline, stamina, technical knowledge), and often mismatch occurs between qualifications and ambitions, resulting in failure. Also, a one-man team faces multiple

"The big picture is that despite al-Qa`ida's continued, intensifying efforts to ignite leaderless jihad in the West, very few jihadist terrorists in Europe were true loners."

risks of being identified pursuing preparations (doing research, acquiring weapons, completing reconnaissance). For example, laws and traditions seem to make extremists' procurement of weapons more risky in Europe than in the United States (reflected in the number of incidents involving lone gunmen).

Fourth, because lone acts of terrorism tend to be associated with people who are somewhat psychologically maladjusted, some highly resourceful and others not so much, they tend to attract attention during preparatory phases for that reason as well.²⁴ The 2011 Norway attacks, however, also demonstrated how a presumed mental

22 Petter Nesser, "How Did Europe's Global Jihadis Obtain Training for their Militant Causes?" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20:2 (2008).

23 Scott Stewart, "Cutting Through the Lone-Wolf Hype," *Stratfor*, September 22, 2011.

24 For a good discussion of the relationship between lone wolf terrorism and psychological factors, see "Lone Wolf Terrorism," Instituut voor Veiligheids- en Crisismanagement, July 6, 2007.

disorder could contribute to the security awareness of a terrorist. The attacker wrote at lengths about how to avoid detection and emphasized how non-Muslim terrorists may "enjoy more 'invisibility' than individuals who have Arabic/Asian appearance and customs" in today's security regime.²⁵

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the fact that the jihadists' typical modus operandi of employing secretive cells with fuzzy cell boundaries has many advantages from the terrorists' point of view. For example, division of labor between cell members and affiliates may reduce the number of red flags per persons in a cell. Moreover, cells composed of multiple people working in parallel on attack plans may simply exhaust the capacity of security services, as exemplified vividly by the Operation Crevice and 7/7 case complexes where the gang of fertilizer plotters was disrupted while Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer fell off the radar.²⁶ Furthermore, while groups and networks imply security risks, they also create far better opportunities for obtaining the needed professionalism (training camps, countersurveillance, bombmaking).

The Future Threat

There have been few genuine loner attacks by jihadists in Europe, and most plots by individuals have resulted in failure. Last summer's attack in Oslo, however, demonstrated fully the damage that can be done by an individual armed with handguns or explosives. Breivik operated consciously off the radar (connecting with right-wing radicals, but discretely) and had highly unusual psychological traits, being diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia by forensic psychiatrists in November 2011.²⁷ He innovatively combined elements from past terrorist operations into one of the most gruesome attacks ever seen. In his manifesto, Breivik stated that

solo-cell systems in combination with martyrdom is the most

25 Berwick, p. 919.

26 Rachel Briggs et al., "Anatomy of a Terrorist Attack: What the Coroner's Inquest Revealed about the London Bombings," Royal United Services Institute, April 2011.

27 Stine Barstad et al., "Behring Breivik har over en lang periode utviklet paranoid schizofreni," *Aftenposten*, November 29, 2011.

efficient and deadly form of modern warfare. This strategy was adapted by jihadist groups. And now we will be using it as well. It is even more valuable to us as we enjoy more “invisibility” than individuals who have Arabic/Asian appearance and customs.²⁸

To be sure, Islamist extremists in Europe are under heavy pressure, and it would have been more difficult for an individual of Arab appearance to imitate the Norway attacks. For example, buying fertilizer and guns would probably imply greater risks. There are numerous examples that such preparations led to disruption of jihadist cells and loners in the past. Despite certain pressures and obstacles, however, al-Qa`ida continues to call for lone operations and Breivik has produced one of the most detailed manuals for this type of attack. The Norway attack has been discussed on radical websites, and European security officials express concern that the “manifesto” could be translated into multiple languages, adding to a growing body of terrorist manuals online.²⁹

As for al-Qa`ida’s campaign to ignite loner attacks, it has been quite intense and has involved top leaders, strategists and theologians aiming to invoke the individual duty of punishing people who insult the Prophet Muhammad. The cartoon affair has made terrorist threats and risk of individual attacks more acute in Scandinavia than other parts of Europe. The main reason for this is that while different jihadist actors disagree on the legitimacy and utility of launching violent operations in Europe, the full spectrum of militant organizations, most extremists and even many mainstream Muslims support the religious verdict of the death penalty for cartoonists who insult the Prophet Muhammad.³⁰

²⁸ Berwick, p. 919.

²⁹ The Norwegian Police Intelligence Security Service (PST) has expressed concerns about translations of Breivik’s anti-Islam terrorist manual. See “Breiviks manifest oversatt til arabisk,” TV2, October 15, 2011. Also, members on the al-Shumukh al-Islami jihadist web forum translated, posted and discussed a newspaper article about the Norway attacks. Pictures of Breivik and his manifesto were displayed on the front page banner of the UK-based website Muslims Against Crusades.

³⁰ Petter Nesser, “Ideologies of Jihad in Europe,” *Terror-*

Conclusion

This quick glance at individual jihadism in Europe suggests that it is important to strike a balance between acknowledging the perils of the loner threat on the one hand, while trying to understand the relationship between loners and their social networks (physical and virtual) on the other. While European security services have gained considerable control with regards to physical networks (radical mosques, cells, training camps), internet platforms such as social media and YouTube channels imply new and poorly understood challenges.

Another challenge is to heighten public awareness about the lone terrorist threat so people report suspicious behavior.³¹ Moreover, there is a need to adapt laws to ease the investigation and prosecution of individual terrorist plotters. At the same time, it is important not to exaggerate the threat and create a level of paranoia. Most of the terrorist acts initially believed to involve a “lone wolf” turned out to be connected to extremist networks and represented a strategic shift rather than a new phenomenon.

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ism and Political Violence 23:2 (2011).

³¹ Scott Stewart, “Fighting Grassroots Terrorism: How Local Vigilance Can Help,” *Stratfor*, August 3, 2011.

Al-Shabab’s Western Recruitment Strategy

By Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens

THE DEATHS OF Anwar al-`Awlaqi and Samir Khan in September 2011 dealt a severe blow to al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula’s (AQAP) ability to project jihadist propaganda to a Western audience. Whether or not AQAP will continue to target Western Muslims for recruitment remains to be seen, although another group is fast emerging as a likely successor. Somalia’s al-Shabab militia has previously made some effort to direct its propaganda toward Western Muslims, yet it is now escalating such outreach.

Although al-Shabab’s priority is the domestic insurgency currently waged against Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government (TFG), there is evidence that it is capitalizing on new opportunities. Like AQAP, the group is attracting English-speaking Muslims, and it is now actively pursuing the recruitment of Western Muslims. Since 2009, Western security agencies have made clear their concerns that al-Shabab could threaten Western cities, noting that large Somali populations in the United Kingdom and United States could act as ideal recruitment pools. The January 2012 arrest of a former U.S. Army soldier charged with trying to join al-Shabab is just the latest incident of how its propaganda is affecting Westerners.¹

By reviewing al-Shabab’s recent propaganda output, this article will show how al-Shabab is recruiting Westerners, and why the group is seeing results.

An Emerging Threat

In September 2011, the head of the United Kingdom’s MI5, Jonathan Evans, warned that the country faced an imminent terrorist threat from British residents trained by al-Shabab. He stated that he was “concerned that it’s only a matter of time before we see terrorism on our streets inspired by those who are today fighting alongside

¹ “Former U.S. Soldier Charged with Trying to Aid Somali Militants,” *Voice of America*, January 9, 2012.

al-Shabaab.”² This alarm was not without foundation. The past years have witnessed a number of UK-based Somalis and other Muslims traveling to the region to train and fight for the Somali jihadists. In October 2007, an unnamed British-Somali was among the first Western-based jihadists to die for al-Shabab when he detonated a suicide vest at an Ethiopian army checkpoint in the town of Baidoa, killing himself and around 20 soldiers.³ In his suicide video, he had a message for his fellow British Muslims:

I am doing this martyrdom operation for the sake of Allah. I advise you to migrate to Somalia and wage war against your enemies. Death in honor is better than life in humiliation...To the Somalis living abroad, are you happy in your comfort while your religion, your people are being attacked and humiliated?⁴

In the United States, the problem is equally serious, with some American Muslims either joining or providing material support to the militia. Among the first to become involved was American convert Zachary Adam Chesser (also known as Abu Talha al-Amriki), who in February 2011 was convicted of providing material support to the terrorist group.⁵ Another example is Somali-American Shirwa Ahmed, who traveled from Minnesota to Somalia where he conducted a suicide bombing in October 2008.

Therefore, al-Shabab’s appeal to Western Muslims is not a new development. It is in the last few months, however, that a more concerted strategy to target Western Muslims has taken shape.

Al-Shabab’s Western Propaganda

In early November 2011, al-Shabab claimed that Abdisalan Hussein Ali, an American-Somali from Minnesota wanted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, took part in an October assault against African Union forces in Mogadishu. He was apparently one of two suicide bombers involved in the attack.⁶ Ali is among a group of at least 11 Americans wanted by the FBI in connection to their associations with al-Shabab. If the group’s claims are confirmed, Ali is at least the third American al-Shabab suicide bomber.⁷

Al-Shabab made a specific effort to promptly release the audio of a “martyrdom” sermon (which al-Shabab claims is delivered by Ali) on jihadist web forums following the October operation. The intention, as with all al-Shabab media aimed at Westerners, was

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to use Ali’s story to awaken militant jihadist feeling among American Muslims. Thus, he called on his audience to migrate to Somalia as part of what is known as the *hijra*, which refers to the Prophet Muhammad’s seventh century flight from Mecca to Medina from where he waged a successful jihad against his enemies.

The juxtaposition of an Islamic historical narrative upon a modern conflict is one of the cornerstones of all al-Qa`ida related media. Just as their pious predecessors had done hundreds of years ago, Western Muslims are told to leave un-Islamic lands, which

are supposedly hostile to them and their religion, and move to countries where they can wage jihad against the modern day crusaders and pharaohs. “Be prepared,” exclaimed the speaker, “the *umma* [global Islamic community] is waiting for us.” To Muslims living in the West, he proclaimed, “don’t sit around like a couch potato or just chill all day...go on the internet and find out the fate of the Muslims...come to the land of jihad.”⁸

Of the Americans wanted by the U.S. government for involvement with al-Shabab, an American named Omar Hammami has by far the highest profile and is now placed firmly at the center of al-Shabab’s Western recruitment strategy. Having joined al-Shabab in late 2006, he made his first public appearance as the American face of the group in an October 2007 interview with al-Jazira, in which he announced:

Oh, Muslims of America, take into consideration the situation in Somalia. After 15 years of chaos and oppressive rule by the American-backed warlords, your brothers stood up and established peace and justice in this land.⁹

Since then, Hammami’s public pronouncements rarely amounted to more than a few Islamic rap songs and short, generic calls to the various theaters of jihad. This changed in early October 2011, however, when he released an audio sermon apparently attempting to stake his claim as the new shaykh of Western jihadists.

Entitled “Lessons Learned,” the sermon was aimed directly at Western Muslims and contained much of the same type of effective messaging utilized previously by al-`Awlaqi. The sermon was a discussion of what he referred to as his “transition in thinking from pre-jihadi days to post-jihadi” provided in the hope that, by explaining how a Western Muslim can become a jihadist, he will encourage others to make a similar transition.¹⁰

² “MI5 Chief Warns of Terror Threat from Britons Trained in Somalia,” *Guardian*, September 16, 2010.

³ “Somali Radicals ‘Importing Terror to UK’ say Intelligence Analysts,” *Times*, February 16, 2009.

⁴ “Somalia: The New Pakistan for Terror Recruitment?” Channel 4 News, February 16, 2010.

⁵ *U.S.A. v. Zachary Adam Chesser*, District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, 2010.

⁶ Josh Kron, “American Identified as Bomber in Attack on African Union in Somalia,” *New York Times*, October 30, 2011.

⁷ Josh Kron, “Wanted by the FBI,” *New York Times*, October 30, 2011.

⁸ Audio message released by al-Shabab claiming to be the voice of Abdisalan Hussein Ali in author’s possession.

⁹ A. Elliott, “The Jihadist Next Door,” *New York Times Magazine*, January 27, 2010.

¹⁰ Omar Hammami, “Lessons Learned,” October 7,

Among the most important changes, he said, is a re-calibration of how a Muslim perceives their identity. What is required is the construction of what may be described as an “*umma*-centric” identity; Western Muslims must become part of the *umma* and cast aside any national or cultural ties. This can only happen, according to Hammami, when “you get out of the belly of the beast [Western host countries] and you start living in the crisis zones with the Muslims.” In a clear reference to the requirement of performing *hijra* discussed above, Hammami argued that living in the West corrupts and damages a Muslim’s link to the *umma* and leads to them overlooking their divinely ordained duties to their co-religionists around the globe. Western Muslims, he asserted, cannot truly experience and be part of the *umma* “by walking down orderly sidewalks and buying Subway sandwiches on your way back from the gym.”¹¹

Muslims avoiding *hijra* and remaining in their host countries has led to the phenomenon of what Hammami referred to as “the Starfish Effect,” whereby Muslims who are cut off from their *umma* generate their own understandings and interpretations of their religion just

“Hammami argued that living in the West corrupts and damages a Muslim’s link to the *umma* and leads to them overlooking their divinely ordained duties to their co-religionists around the globe.”

as a starfish regenerates a lost limb. Although he used an analogy that perhaps lacks the sophistication of more articulate jihadists, Hammami’s point is one which has been made by jihadist ideologues for many years: Western Muslims have decided to reinterpret their religion (and in particular their views on jihad) to please their non-Muslim host society. They have made the error of customizing their

religion to make it more compatible with Western society. For the Salafi-jihadis, this is unacceptable. Therefore, these “Starfish Muslims” perceive global events involving Muslims through a corrupt, Western frame or, as Hammami put it, “from the perspective of their brand new Ray-Ban or Oakley sunglasses.”¹²

Instead of celebrating a terrorist attack as a blow to those waging a global war on Islam and Muslims, Hammami admonished “Starfish Mo” for “jumping up and down” and criticizing such violence. Why should “Starfish Mo” care about the deaths of “Joe and Sally” (Hammami’s reference to non-Muslim Westerners)? Seen through a jihadist frame, these individuals are not innocent civilians worthy of any pity; rather, they are “part of a civilization that is at war with Islam,” and this is how Western Muslims must recalibrate both their own identities and their perceptions of the people with whom they share their daily lives.¹³

Through these arguments, Hammami seeks to create an unbearable tension for Western Muslims between being true to their religion on the one hand, while also living in the lands of disbelief. “Trying to practice your religion in *dar al-kuffar* [the land of unbelief] is nothing more than a dream world” as it requires a Muslim to supposedly deny the “face of Islam” by rejecting supremacist terrorist violence and searching for a moderate path. Not even Western Muslims sympathetic to the global jihad are spared, as Hammami criticized them for “supporting jihad and the *umma*, while here [in the West] at the same time we’re still going on about our normal everyday lives, and trying to engage in *da`wa* [proselytizing], and giving the *kuffar* smiling faces.” It is not enough, therefore, to sympathize with or passively support al-Qa`ida; Muslims must join the fight and “throw your lot in with the rest of the *umma*.”¹⁴

One of the recurring features of Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-`Awlaqi’s work was his desire to eliminate the ideological and practical impediments facing Western Muslims

who are considering joining the jihad, and Hammami continues in a similar vein during his discussion of *ribat*, or living in areas where Muslims are involved in battle. According to `Abdullah `Azzam, *ribat* is the stage immediately following the *hijra*, where a Muslim lives among the fighters and near the front lines before he becomes directly involved in jihad.¹⁵ Hammami is aware that many Western Islamists and Salafists argue that jihad cannot be pursued by an individual until they have gained the requisite knowledge about Islam through study, and he tries to remove this obstacle by arguing that this can take place after the *hijra* has been performed during the *ribat* stage when “they have a lot of free time.” For Salafi-jihadis, action is almost always preferable to discussion and study, and Hammami made this clear:

So for those of you out there who believe that the virtue of seeking knowledge is greater than the virtue of acting upon it, that it’s greater than the virtue of fulfilling the individual obligation of liberating the Muslim lands... we have a limited time offer for you...you have the opportunity to engage in both of these actions.¹⁶

Moving on from the ideological to the practical aspects of taking part in jihad, Hammami discussed the realities of fighting on the front lines of jihad, warning his pampered Western audience not to expect the amenities they enjoy at home. They must prepare themselves for a less comfortable life:

Here in Somalia especially, you’ll probably never, ever see a microwave, or even a normal oven... And then you get, most of the mujahidin, even seeing television... it becomes a rarity for many of us.¹⁷

For those who may be put off by this rather bleak and dire warning, Hammami offered the popular slogan used in advertising for Slim Fast diet milkshakes: “if I can do it, you can do it.”¹⁸

¹⁵ `Abdullah `Azzam, “Join the Caravan,” Azzam Publications, 2001.

¹⁶ Hammami.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

2011.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

His frank assessment of the experience also extends to the mujahidin themselves, who he admitted are “not angels,” but rather “humans, they make mistakes probably just as often as they get things right.” Western Muslims must not, however, use the faults of some jihadist fighters as an excuse not to take part in jihad, and instead learn to “separate between the validity of the cause, and the sanctity of those upholding it.” In what is perhaps the clearest example of Hammami’s desire to pair himself with al-`Awlaqi, he cited Yusuf al-`Uyayri jihadist tract “Constants on the Path of Jihad” to prove the righteousness of the cause and the guarantee of victory.¹⁹ This was no doubt done in the full knowledge that his English-speaking audience could only have come across this work through al-`Awlaqi’s translation of it, which is among the most famous and influential works for the Western jihadist audience.

Al-Shabab’s Cultivation of Alternative Media

Although Anwar al-`Awlaqi’s individual charisma and popularity allowed him to gain influence over a substantial number of followers, the peak of his career as a jihadist preacher came when he became associated with AQAP’s media center, al-Malahim. Al-Qa`ida and its affiliates have long known that to capitalize on the popularity of individual preachers and produce effective propaganda, they require an entire media apparatus that provides a clear alternative to mainstream Western media, which they consider to be hostile to Muslims. Through its media center, AQAP was able to consolidate all of its propaganda, and package it effectively, with al-`Awlaqi at the center of the products designed for Western Muslims. Al-Shabab has followed suit, and in July 2010 began to produce lengthy English-language propaganda through its media wing, al-Kataib.

In the past, al-Kataib has produced videos designed to appear like Western news reports, only with a clear jihadist bent. In the videos, the reporter, whose face is concealed by a scarf, speaks in a British accent and travels the battlefields of Somalia singing the praises of the mujahidin and claiming

victories where other media have reported great losses for the group. The most recent of these, released a month after Hammami’s sermon, is also among the most comprehensive they have produced. Entitled “The Burundian Bloodbath: Battle of Daynile,” it is a report of a recent battle between al-Shabab and Burundian soldiers who formed part of the African Union contingent in Daynile, a district in southeastern Somalia. Despite other media reports of al-Shabab struggling to control the area, the reporter talked of a massacre of the “African Crusaders and their Western masters.”²⁰

Much of the report tried to give its Western audience an impression of the large, international scope and apparently sectarian nature of the supposed war on Islam and Muslims. The video focused on the “Made in France” tags found on the armored vests of dead Burundian soldiers. Additionally, among the interviewees was Shaykh Ali Muhammad Rage, an

“Such Twitter interactions, although short and seemingly innocuous, serve a purpose: they strengthen the resolve of Western sympathizers and potential recruits by offering a conduit through which they can interact with operational members.”

al-Shabab spokesman who declared that: “We also want to let the Muslims know that this is a war between *eman* [belief] and *kufir* [unbelief], between Islam and Christianity.”²¹ To illustrate his point, he held up a bible and cross taken from the bodies of the Burundian soldiers and said: “what you see here is a Christian cross and a bible. They carry these two along with them as we carry the book of Allah and the Sunna

20 “The Burundian Bloodbath: Battle of Daynile,” al-Kataib Media Foundation, November 11, 2011.

21 Ibid.

of His Messenger.”²² The holy nature of this conflict, according to Rage, meant that all of the world’s Muslims are obligated to join the fight: “Since the battle is between the defenders of this cross and bible, and those defending the Holy Qur’an, it is obligatory upon the Muslim people as a whole to stand by and support the Holy Qur’an.”²³

More recently, al-Shabab’s desire to cultivate its own alternative media led them to establish an English-language Twitter account on December 7, 2011, which has thus far been used to antagonize the invading Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) and call followers to jihad. Called the HSM Press Office,²⁴ it describes the group as “an Islamic movement that governs South & Cen. [tral] Somalia & part of the global struggle towards the revival of Islamic Khilaafa [Caliphate].” It is unclear who runs the account, although it is almost certainly a native English speaker, and messages display a surprisingly high standard of vocabulary. The account, much like the al-Kataib news reports but in real-time, allows al-Shabab to announce its attacks and other operations without having to rely on Western news reports. One of the first tweets made on the account, for example, stated:

6-DEC: Martyrdom seeker infiltrates K4 circle [main traffic circle in Mogadishu] in #Mogadishu. 3 #Ugandanm [Ugandan] 7 TFG soldiers pronounced dead on the scene. 2 mercenaries injured.²⁵

Twitter also makes the group more accessible to followers, and allows the administrator of the account to carry on conversations with other Twitter users. In one example, a jihadist Twitter user sent a message to the al-Shabab account saying: “May Allah give you victory! I love you for the sake of Allah!” Al-Shabab responded in kind, saying: “May the One for whom you love us for His sake [Allah] love you!”²⁶

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 “HSM” is an acronym for Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahidin.

25 HSM Press Office Twitter account, December 6, 2011.

26 HSM Press Office Twitter account, December 8, 2011.

19 Ibid.

Such Twitter interactions, although short and seemingly innocuous, serve a purpose: they strengthen the resolve of Western sympathizers and potential recruits by offering a conduit through which they can interact with operational members.²⁷

These exchanges, however, are not limited to followers, and much of the account is dominated by regular conversations between al-Shabab and the spokesman of the Kenyan military, Major E. Chirchir. In what amounts to a propaganda war being waged on the social networking site, each participant attempts to delegitimize and undermine their opponent, calling into question both the morality and effectiveness of each other's military actions.

On December 9, 2011, for example, Major Chirchir wrote on his Twitter account of the array of assets available to his force: "Look at the assets committed to the operation. We have all the components; LAND, AIR, MARITIME."²⁸

The reply from al-Shabab was dismissive and mocked his men's fighting abilities: "Assets are worthless without men; your inexperienced boys flee from confrontation & flinch in the face of death."²⁹

Al-Shabab's use of Twitter as a propaganda battlefield should, therefore, be seen in the context of the group's desire to increase its ability to influence the minds of Western Muslims, and demonstrates the importance that the group places on taking some element of control over the reporting of its actions to the Western world.

Conclusion

In the near-term, there are likely to be attempts by Hammami and al-Kataib to redouble their propaganda efforts, and it is possible that they may produce their own version of AQAP's English-

language *Inspire* magazine as they try to take the Western jihadist media mantle from AQAP.

Concerns about the threat posed by al-Shabab are not only based on recent intelligence, but also on the history and legacy of other foreign jihadists. As both the Afghan and Bosnian conflicts have demonstrated, traveling for jihad is not always a one-way street, and in recent years Somalia, along with Yemen, has emerged as the latest incubator of global jihad. This may lead to the creation of the next generation of hardened mujahidin who, after their experiences on the battlefield and extensive terrorist training, could seek to establish themselves in other countries, much like veterans of Afghanistan have done all over the globe. Due to Western governments' continued scrutiny of this issue, it will be difficult for an American or British Somali to return from Somalia and successfully carry out an attack, although al-Shabab may pursue this objective alongside their main aim of recruiting Westerners to take part in the Somali insurgency.

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Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

November 1, 2011 (UNITED STATES): A U.S. federal appeals court upheld the convictions of five men accused of trying to join al-Qa`ida to blow up the 110-story Sears Tower in Chicago, as well as to bomb FBI offices in several cities. The men were part of the "Liberty City Seven." – *AP, November 2*

November 2, 2011 (THAILAND): Suspected Muslim insurgents killed six people in southern Thailand's Narathiwat Province. According to Agence France-Presse, "Thailand's southernmost provinces have been plagued by more than eight years of conflict that has claimed the lives of more than 4,800 people, both Muslims and Buddhists." – *AFP, November 2*

November 3, 2011 (CANADA): Canada's top court upheld a lower court decision to halt the extradition to the United States of Abdullah Khadr, an alleged al-Qa`ida arms supplier. – *AFP, November 3*

November 3, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters launched an attack at the compound of ESKO company, a contractor working with the international coalition, in Herat Province. At least one guard was injured in the attack. – *AP, November 3*

November 3, 2011 (IRAQ): Shi`a cleric Muqtada al-Sadr said that despite the upcoming U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, "the American occupation will stay in Iraq under different names." Al-Sadr charged that since the U.S. military plans on keeping troops in the larger region, the United States wants to "control the Middle East." – *AP, November 3*

November 3, 2011 (IRAQ): Two roadside bombs exploded near a police checkpoint in Karrada district of Baghdad, killing four policemen and one other person. – *AFP, November 3*

November 3, 2011 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber targeted anti-al-Qa`ida militiamen near Ba`quba, Diyala Province. Ten minutes after the blast, a car bomb exploded in a nearby parking area. A total of five people

²⁷ For more on how this level of access to members of a group can encourage recruitment and mobilize supporters, see Lauren Kessler, *The Dissident Press: Alternative Journalism in American History* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1984).

²⁸ Major E Chirchir's Twitter account, December 9, 2011.

²⁹ HSM Press Office Twitter account, December 9, 2011.

were killed in the two blasts. – *AFP, November 3*

November 3, 2011 (IRAQ): Gunmen shot to death a policeman at his home in Mosul, Ninawa Province. – *AFP, November 3*

November 3, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. drone strike killed at least three militants in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The attack targeted members of the Haqqani network. – *AFP, November 3*

November 3, 2011 (KENYA): Kenya's military spokesman warned on Twitter that al-Shabab "has resorted to using donkeys to transport their weapons," and said that "Kenyans dealing in donkey trade along the Kenya-Somali border are advised not to sell their animals to Al Shabaab." – *MSNBC, November 3*

November 4, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban leader Mullah Omar released a statement to his fighters, telling them to avoid causing civilian casualties. He said, "If it is irrefutably proven that the blood of innocent Muslims is spilled by the negligence of mujahidin, then a penalty should be implemented in accordance with Shari'a." In response, a U.S. spokesperson told reporters: "They [the Taliban] say one thing and do another...it's an obvious contradiction. From the top down, the Taliban is waging a murderous campaign that deliberately targets civilians...The facts speak for themselves." – *AP, November 4; Reuters, November 8*

November 4, 2011 (YEMEN): Yemeni government forces killed five suspected al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula militants in southern Abyan Province. – *CNN, November 5*

November 4, 2011 (NIGERIA): Suicide bombers attacked a military base in Maiduguri, Borno State. Authorities suspect that Boko Haram was behind the violence. The number of casualties was not immediately known. – *AP, November 4; BBC, November 4*

November 4, 2011 (NIGERIA): A car bomb exploded outside a building used by Nigeria's military in Damaturu of northeastern Yobe State. The bomb was part of a series of attacks on churches and mosques in Damaturu. The number of casualties from the coordinated assault was not immediately clear, although dozens are presumed dead. – *AP, November 4; Telegraph, November 6*

November 5, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives near Quetta, Baluchistan Province. The bomber's device appeared to detonate prematurely, and he was the only casualty. – *Dawn, November 5*

November 6, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): Two suicide bombers attacked worshippers on the outskirts of Old Baghlan City in Baghlan Province, killing seven people. Two of the dead were police commanders. According to Afghan police, one bomber successfully detonated his explosives while the other was apprehended before he could execute his part of the attack. – *AP, November 6*

November 7, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb exploded near a police vehicle in northern Badghis Province, killing 11 people. – *Voice of America, November 8; AFP, November 8*

November 7, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber targeted a former government official outside a mosque in Swabi District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, killing the man, his son as well as his bodyguard. The official was a distinguished leader in the Awami National Party. – *AP, November 7; The News International, November 8*

November 7, 2011 (YEMEN): Yemeni security forces killed six militants in Zinjibar, Abyan Province. – *AP, November 7*

November 8, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A large contingent of Taliban fighters attacked a U.S. military post in eastern Paktika Province. According to Afghan officials, at least 50 Taliban militants were killed after soldiers called in coalition air support. There

were no reports of coalition casualties. – *Voice of America, November 9*

November 9, 2011 (UNITED STATES): Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, a Saudi man accused of plotting the 2000 bombing of the *USS Cole*, appeared in a military courtroom in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. It was the first time al-Nashiri has been seen in public since his capture nine years ago. According to the *New York Times*, "He is also the first 'high-value' detainee—a senior terrorism suspect who was held for a time by the C.I.A. at a 'black site' prison and subjected to what the agency called 'enhanced interrogation techniques'—to receive a trial at Guantanamo. For that reason, his case is also seen as a forerunner to the planned prosecution of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four other accused conspirators in the Sept. 11 attacks." – *New York Times, November 9*

November 9, 2011 (NORTH AFRICA): Mokhtar Belmokhtar, a top leader in al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), claimed to have acquired weapons from neighboring Libya. Analysts worry that AQIM may be in possession of surface-to-air missiles, taken from slain Libyan leader Mu`ammar Qadhafi's arsenal. – *AFP, November 9*

November 10, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A group of Taliban suicide attackers stormed a government office in Paktia Province, killing three Afghan policemen and injuring three U.S. soldiers. – *AFP, November 10*

November 12, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani security forces raided a Lashkar-i-Jhangvi hideout in Jellum district of Punjab Province. During the raid, however, four intelligence officials were killed. – *AP, November 12*

November 12, 2011 (KAZAKHSTAN): A militant in the southern town of Taraz killed seven people. The man first shot to death four law enforcement officers and two civilians before being captured by a police captain. He then detonated a suicide bomb, killing the police captain. A group calling itself Jund al-Khilafah (Soldiers of the Caliphate) took credit for the attack. – *RFE/RL, November 14*

November 13, 2011 (YEMEN): Yemeni security forces killed at least nine suspected al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula members in southern Abyan Province. - *Voice of America, November 13*

November 13, 2011 (NIGERIA): Algeria's deputy foreign minister said that intelligence reports show coordination between al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb and the Nigerian Islamist sect Boko Haram. - *Reuters, November 13*

November 15, 2011 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida chief Ayman al-Zawahiri released a new video message reminiscing about Usama bin Ladin, saying that the slain al-Qa`ida leader was "tender" and "kind." - *BBC, November 15*

November 15, 2011 (UNITED KINGDOM): Police arrested four men for plotting to execute a suicide attack in Birmingham. The men are accused of terrorism fundraising and traveling to Pakistan for terrorist training. - *Telegraph, November 16*

November 15, 2011 (NORWAY): Three Norwegians charged with plotting to bomb a Danish newspaper for printing cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad pleaded not guilty in court. The ringleader of the group, Mikael Davud, allegedly trained at an al-Qa`ida camp in Pakistan. - *Reuters, November 15*

November 15, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. drone killed seven alleged militants in Miran Shah, North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. - *AP, November 15*

November 15, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Suspected U.S. drones killed 16 alleged militants in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. - *AP, November 16*

November 16, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A car bomb exploded at a police checkpoint in Karachi, killing three suspected militants and one police officer. - *AP, November 16*

November 16, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Insurgents attacked a military checkpoint in Kurram Agency of the

Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing one officer. - *AP, November 16*

November 17, 2011 (PAKISTAN): U.S. drones killed eight suspected militants in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. - *Voice of America, November 17*

November 17, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated a grenade after Pakistani security forces raided his apartment in Karachi. He was killed in the blast. Authorities found in his possession both U.S. and Pakistani passports. He has been identified as Saeed Abdul Salam. - *AP, November 19*

November 17, 2011 (SOMALIA): The African Union is weighing a plan that could bring thousands of Ethiopian troops back into Somalia to apply more pressure on al-Shabab. The Ethiopian troops would be part of a new offensive. African Union troops are currently in Mogadishu, and Kenyan forces are fighting in the south on the Somalia-Kenya border. By November 19-20, reports suggested that Ethiopian military convoys had moved across the border into Somalia. - *New York Times, November 17; Voice of America, November 20*

November 18, 2011 (IRAQ): Senior Iraqi Interior Ministry official Adnan al-Asadi warned that the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq has given al-Qa`ida and its affiliates the opportunity to strengthen operations in the country's northern and western provinces. "When the U.S. withdrew from this triangle which is Diyala, Salahuddin, Anbar and Mosul...a gap was left behind," he told Reuters. "Al Qaeda has redeployed in the area... Al Qaeda is present, it appears and disappears and carries out operations, attacks and retreats. It's a guerrilla war, but they are no longer able to hold ground." - *Reuters, November 18*

November 19, 2011 (UNITED STATES): Police arrested Jose Pimentel on charges of plotting to bomb police and post offices in New York City, as well as U.S. troops returning home from overseas. The "al-Qa`ida sympathizer" is 27-years-old, a U.S. citizen and a resident of Manhattan. He is originally from the Dominican Republic. New

York City Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said authorities "had to act quickly...because he was in fact putting this bomb together. He was drilling holes and it would have been not appropriate for us to let him walk out the door with that bomb." New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg said that Pimentel "appears to be a total lone wolf. He was not part of a larger conspiracy emanating from abroad." - *AP, November 21*

November 21, 2011 (NIGERIA): Nigeria's secret police said that Islamist sect Boko Haram had "political patronage and sponsorship" in the country. According to Agence France-Presse, "Speculation has been rife over political links to at least certain factions of Boko Haram, which has claimed responsibility for dozens of attacks, including an August suicide bombing of UN headquarters in Abuja which killed at least 24 people. Such speculation has pointed to local politics in Borno State, where Maiduguri is the capital, or opposition to President Goodluck Jonathan in the mainly Muslim north." - *AFP, November 21*

November 22, 2011 (GLOBAL): According to the *Washington Post*, "Ayman al-Zawahiri and his second in command, Abu Yahya al-Libi, are the last remaining 'high-value' targets of the CIA's drone campaign against al-Qaeda in Pakistan, U.S. officials said, although lower-level fighters and other insurgent groups remain a focus of Predator surveillance and strikes." - *Washington Post, November 22*

November 22, 2011 (TURKEY): Turkish police detained 15 people suspected of having links to al-Qa`ida. The police raids occurred in the central Anatolian city of Konya. - *AP, November 22*

November 22, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Husain Haqqani, Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, resigned over a reported attempt to seek U.S. assistance to rein in Pakistan's military. On November 23, he was replaced by lawmaker Sherry Rehman, a former information minister, who will serve as Pakistan's new ambassador to the United States. - *AP, November 17; Los Angeles Times, November 24*

November 22, 2011 (PAKISTAN): The Pakistani Taliban announced a ceasefire with the Pakistani government in support of peace talks. - *AP, November 22*

November 24, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban militants killed at least seven local guards in an attack on a goods convoy in western Farah Province. - *Voice of America, November 24*

November 24, 2011 (NIGERIA): A purported spokesman for Islamist sect Boko Haram claimed to "have links with al-Qa`ida...They assist us and we assist them." - *AFP, November 24*

November 24, 2011 (MALI): Two French geologists were abducted from their hotel by gunmen in Hombori, Mali. - *BBC, November 24*

November 25, 2011 (MALI): Gunmen killed a German man in Timbuktu, while also abducting three men from the Netherlands, South Africa and Sweden. According to the Associated Press, "A witness and an official said gunmen burst into the restaurant, grabbed four tourists dining there and executed one when he refused to climb into their truck." - *AP, November 26*

November 26, 2011 (PAKISTAN): NATO helicopters and fighter jets killed 24 Pakistani soldiers in Pakistani territory at a checkpoint on the Afghan border. Afghan and Western officials, however, said that they first came under fire from across the Pakistani border, which is why the deadly airstrike was ordered. The incident has added severe tension to the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. - *Telegraph, November 26; Wall Street Journal, November 28*

November 26, 2011 (KENYA): Suspected al-Shabab fighters raided a police post near Mandera in northern Kenya, seizing weapons and ammunition. - *Reuters, November 26*

November 27, 2011 (MOROCCO): An Islamist party in Morocco won power for the first time in the country's history. Election results showed that the Islamic Justice and Development Party won a majority of parliamentary seats. The elections come after the Moroccan king decided to bring

reforms in the face of the Arab Spring protests. - *Telegraph, November 27*

November 27, 2011 (PHILIPPINES): A bomb ripped through the Atilano Pension House, a budget hotel in Zamboanga City, killing three people. Authorities blame the Abu Sayyaf Group. - *Sun Star, November 28*

November 28, 2011 (NORTH AFRICA): British Foreign Secretary William Hague warned that mercenary fighters driven out of Libya could end up joining al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb. - *AP, November 28*

November 28, 2011 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle rammed into the gate of the al-Hout prison in Taji, north of Baghdad. Ten policemen and nine civilians were killed. - *AP, November 28*

November 28, 2011 (SOMALIA): Al-Shabab banned 16 aid agencies operating in famine-hit Somalia, accusing them of political bias. Some of the banned agencies are affiliated with the United Nations, such as Unicef. - *BBC, November 28*

November 29, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Authorities announced the arrest of Commander Toofan, a key figure in Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan. He was apprehended in Nowshera District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. - *The News International, November 29*

November 29, 2011 (YEMEN): Government troops killed at least 11 suspected al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula militants in Abyan Province. - *CNN, December 1*

November 30, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A car bomb killed Hashim Khan, an anti-Taliban tribal leader, in Orakzai Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. - *CNN, November 30*

November 30, 2011 (SOMALIA): A suicide bomber killed at least five people outside a military compound in Mogadishu. The bomber detonated explosives after being approached by security forces outside Villa Baidoa, a government base in the capital. - *Voice of America, November 30*

December 1, 2011 (UNITED STATES): Obama administration national security lawyers said that U.S. citizens are legitimate military targets if they join arms with al-Qa`ida. - *Toronto Star, December 1*

December 1, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Al-Qa`ida claimed responsibility for the August 2011 kidnapping of Warren Weinstein, a 70-year-old American aid worker, in Pakistan. Al-Qa`ida chief Ayman al-Zawahiri said that Weinstein would be released if the United States halted airstrikes in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. Al-Zawahiri also demanded the release of all al-Qa`ida and Taliban suspects around the world. "Just as the Americans detain all whom they suspect of links to al Qaeda and the Taliban, even remotely, we detained this man who is neck-deep in American aid to Pakistan since the 1970s," al-Zawahiri said. - *CBS News, December 1*

December 2, 2011 (UNITED STATES): U.S. Homeland Security Director Janet Napolitano warned that the risk from "lone wolf" terrorists had increased. "There's been a lot of evolution [with terrorism] over the past three years," she said. "The thing that's most noticeable to me is the growth of the lone wolf." Napolitano also said, "From a U.S. perspective, over the last several years we have had more attacks emanating from AQAP than from core al-Qaida." - *AP, December 2*

December 2, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber killed three people outside a small U.S. military base in Logar Province. - *UPI, December 2*

December 3, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb killed three NATO soldiers in eastern Afghanistan. - *AFP, December 3*

December 5, 2011 (PHILIPPINES): Armed men abducted an Australian man from his home on Mindanao island in the southern Philippines. Authorities suspect that the Abu Sayyaf Group is responsible. - *AFP, December 5*

December 6, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber targeted a crowded Kabul shrine as Shi`a gathered to mark the festival of Ashura. The

explosion killed at least 55 people. A Taliban spokesman publicly denied involvement. - *Reuters, December 6*

December 6, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A bicycle bomb exploded near a Shi`a mosque in northern Mazar-i-Sharif, Balkh Province, killing four people. A Taliban spokesman publicly denied involvement. - *Reuters, December 6; BBC, December 6*

December 6, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghan President Hamid Karzai assured that Pakistan would play a role in any Afghan peace process. "Pakistan's role in any negotiations with the Taliban is very important and that is what we are seeking," he said. - *Reuters, December 6*

December 6, 2011 (SOMALIA): A suicide bomber in a vehicle detonated explosives 50 meters from the Turkish Embassy in Mogadishu, killing at least three people. - *Reuters, December 6*

December 7, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb killed 19 Afghan civilians in Helmand Province. - *BBC, December 7*

December 7, 2011 (YEMEN): Militants linked to al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula attacked an army post in Abyan Province, but were driven back. Approximately nine militants and one Yemeni soldier were killed. - *Huffington Post, December 8*

December 7, 2011 (SOMALIA): Al-Shabab created a Twitter account. According to the BBC, al-Shabab "writes sophisticated press releases in excellent English, complete with photographs. And now it has a Twitter account. Perhaps this is in response to the highly active Twitter account of Kenya's military spokesman." - *BBC, December 8*

December 8, 2011 (UNITED STATES): The White House released a new plan to combat homegrown domestic terrorism and attempts by al-Qa`ida to radicalize or recruit American Muslims. The document, called the Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP), aims to "prevent all forms of violent extremism, [but] we will prioritize preventing violent extremism and terrorism that is inspired by al-Qaeda

and its affiliates and adherents." - *AFP, December 8*

December 8, 2011 (GERMANY): German police arrested a 27-year-old man in Bochum on charges of planning an al-Qa`ida attack. - *Reuters, December 9*

December 9, 2011 (UNITED STATES): An indictment unsealed in federal court in Brooklyn charged Sayfildin Tahir Sharif with conspiring to kill Americans and providing material support to terrorists. Sharif is currently in custody in Canada. According to the Associated Press, "Prosecutors say he was part of a terror network behind separate attacks in Iraq in 2009 that killed five American soldiers outside a U.S. base and seven people at an Iraqi police complex. They say Sharif was caught on a wiretap giving the attackers encouragement and advice. The 38-year-old Canadian citizen and Iraqi national was arrested in Edmonton, Alberta, on a U.S. warrant in January [2011]." - *AP, December 9*

December 9, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber killed a district police chief and five other people outside a mosque in Kunar Province. - *Reuters, December 9*

December 9, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A roadside bomb killed three Pakistani soldiers in Karachi. - *AFP, December 8*

December 10, 2011 (PHILIPPINES): A 14-year-old American boy who was kidnapped by suspected Abu Sayyaf Group militants escaped after five months in jungle captivity. He was recovered by a village official in Lamitan town on southern Basilan Island. - *AP, December 10; Philippine Inquirer, December 12*

December 12, 2011 (YEMEN): Several militants from al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula escaped a prison in Aden, tunneling their way to freedom. At least 10 prisoners escaped through the 130-foot long tunnel. - *AP, December 12*

December 13, 2011 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber killed a police officer in Baghdad. - *AFP, December 13*

December 13, 2011 (IRAQ): Gunmen shot and killed a Christian man and his wife in Mosul, Ninawa Province. - *AFP, December 13*

December 13, 2011 (YEMEN): Yemeni security forces arrested six alleged al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula militants for planning attacks on foreign and local targets. - *Reuters, December 13*

December 13, 2011 (NORTH AFRICA): Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) posted photos of five Europeans kidnapped in Mali in November. - *Reuters, December 13*

December 14, 2011 (CANADA): Canada announced it would prosecute a Toronto man, Mohamed Hassan Hersi, who is charged with planning to fly to Africa to join al-Shabab. - *AFP, December 14*

December 14, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "Afghanistan recalled its ambassador in Qatar on Wednesday to protest the Persian Gulf nation's attempts to exclude Kabul from secret U.S.-backed efforts to establish the first openly operating Taliban representative office since 2001, Afghan officials said." - *Wall Street Journal, December 15*

December 16, 2011 (UNITED STATES): Waad Ramadan Alwan, an Iraqi man, pleaded guilty in a Kentucky courtroom to trying to send weapons and cash to al-Qa`ida operatives in Iraq. - *AP, December 16*

December 16, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): At least one Taliban fighter attacked a police station in Kabul with gunfire and grenades before fleeing. There were no casualties. - *New York Post, December 16*

December 18, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A man threw grenades at a police vehicle in a crowded market in Khost city, and then fled the area. Eighteen civilians and two policemen were wounded. - *AFP, December 17*

December 19, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): Despite protests from Afghan President Hamid Karzai, NATO said it would continue its night raids against suspected insurgents in Afghanistan.

According to the Associated Press, "The raids have become a flash point for anger over foreign meddling in Afghanistan and whether detention operations will be run by the Afghans or Americans. Karzai has demanded that foreign troops stop entering homes, saying Afghan citizens cannot feel secure if they think armed soldiers might burst into their houses in the middle of the night. [Brigadier General Carsten] Jacobson countered that the raids remain the safest form of operation to take out insurgent leaders. They account for less than 1 percent of civilian casualties, and in 85 percent of cases no shots are fired, he said." - *AP, December 19*

December 19, 2011 (YEMEN): Fighting between Yemeni soldiers and al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula in Abyan Province left two soldiers and 13 militants dead. - *AFP, December 20*

December 20, 2011 (GLOBAL): A new video from al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula appeared on Islamist web forums, eulogizing slain Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-`Awlaqi. Al-`Awlaqi was killed by a U.S. drone in September 2011. - *CNN, December 20*

December 20, 2011 (UNITED STATES): A federal jury found Tarek Mehanna guilty of four terrorism-related charges and three charges of lying to authorities. He faces life in prison. Mehanna was born in the United States and raised in the suburbs of Boston. - *AP, December 20*

December 20, 2011 (MAURITANIA): Suspected al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb militants kidnapped a Mauritanian policeman near the border with Mali. - *Reuters, December 21*

December 20, 2011 (SOMALIA): The first contingent of Djiboutian soldiers landed in Mogadishu to join the African Union peacekeeping force. "An advance party consisting of 100 troops...arrived at Mogadishu airport this afternoon," a statement said. "A further 800 troops will follow in the course of the next week or so to bring the Djiboutian contingent up to strength." - *AFP, December 20*

December 21, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb killed five Polish soldiers in Ghazni Province. - *AP, December 21*

December 22, 2011 (UNITED STATES): The U.S. State Department and Treasury Department announced a \$10 million bounty for information that leads to the arrest of Kurdish-Syrian Ezedin Abdel Aziz Khalil, also known as Yasin al-Suri, an al-Qa`ida financier and facilitator operating from Iran. The statement read, "Al-Suri's network has served as a financial conduit, collecting funds from donors throughout the Gulf and moving those via Iran to al Qaeda's leadership in Afghanistan and Iraq. Al-Suri's network also serves as the core pipeline for al Qaeda to funnel operatives from the Middle East to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Al-Suri works with the Iranian government to secure the release of al Qaeda operatives held in Iranian prisons. Once released, the Iranian government transfers the prisoners to al-Suri, who then helps them transit to Pakistan." - *ABC News, December 22*

December 22, 2011 (IRAQ): Sixteen blasts mostly targeting Shi'a tore through Baghdad, killing at least 69 people. - *AP, December 23*

December 22, 2011 (YEMEN): A suspected U.S. drone killed a relative of al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula chief Nasir al-Wahayshi in Abyan Province. - *Reuters, December 23*

December 23, 2011 (PAKISTAN): According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "In an effort to mend badly frayed relations with Pakistan, the CIA has suspended drone missile strikes on gatherings of low-ranking militants believed to be involved in cross-border attacks on U.S. troops or facilities in Afghanistan, current and former U.S. officials say. The undeclared halt in CIA attacks, now in its sixth week, is aimed at reversing a sharp erosion of trust after a series of deadly incidents, including the mistaken attack by U.S. gunships that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers last month." - *Los Angeles Times, December 23*

December 23, 2011 (SYRIA): Two suicide bombers in vehicles detonated explosives outside the compounds for Syria's intelligence services in Damascus, killing at least 40 people. The Syrian government blamed al-Qa`ida for the blasts. - *Huffington Post, December 23; Wall Street Journal, December 24*

December 24, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A Pakistani Taliban suicide bomber drove an explosives-laden vehicle into a paramilitary camp in Bannu town of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, killing six soldiers. - *AP, December 24*

December 24, 2011 (KENYA): Two grenades were thrown at a nightclub in Wajir district in northeastern Kenya near the Somali border. At least seven people were wounded. Authorities suspect that al-Shabab was behind the attack. - *Reuters, December 25*

December 25, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated explosives during a funeral in the northern city of Taloqan, Takhar Province. At least 20 people, including a member of parliament, were killed. - *Reuters, December 25*

December 25, 2011 (NIGERIA): A series of Christmas Day bomb attacks tore through Nigeria, killing at least 40 people. Some of the attacks targeted churches. The Islamist group Boko Haram claimed responsibility. - *Sydney Morning Herald, December 26*

December 25, 2011 (YEMEN): Gunmen shot to death an intelligence chief in Aden. Authorities blamed the assassination on al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula. - *AFP, December 25*

December 26, 2011 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber detonated a car bomb at a Baghdad checkpoint near the Iraqi Interior Ministry, killing seven people. - *AP, December 26*

December 27, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb killed three NATO troops in eastern Afghanistan. - *AP, December 28*

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

December 27, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): Gunmen shot to death a community council leader in Musa Qala district of Helmand Province. The man's 20-year-old son and two-year-old grandson were also killed. – *AP, December 28*

December 27, 2011 (GAZA STRIP): Israeli officials said they killed an al-Qa`ida-affiliated militant in the Gaza Strip, accusing him of plotting attacks on Israel from Egypt. The man, identified as Abdallah Telbani, was killed in a missile strike. – *Reuters, December 27*

December 29, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): An Afghan soldier shot to death two French soldiers in Kapisa Province. The Afghan soldier was apparently in league with the Taliban. As stated by the *Los Angeles Times*, “A Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said the shooting had been carried out by what it described as a sleeper agent named Ibrahim, who had joined ‘the puppet army’ for that specific purpose.” – *Los Angeles Times, December 29*

December 29, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb killed 10 members of a British-trained Afghan force in southern Afghanistan. – *Wall Street Journal, December 30*

December 30, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb killed four Afghan civilians in Uruzgan Province. – *AFP, December 30*

December 30, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A possible suicide bomber killed at least 13 people in Quetta, Baluchistan Province. The Baluchistan Liberation Army claimed responsibility. – *The Nation, December 31*

December 31, 2011 (IRAQ): Gunmen killed five members of a government-backed Sunni militia at a checkpoint in Diyala Province. – *Reuters, December 31*

December 31, 2011 (IRAQ): Iraqis commemorated the official withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. Although the last U.S. troops departed Iraq on December 18, the date of December 31 marked the end of the 2008 U.S.-Iraq security pact. “I declare this day, the 31st of December, on which the withdrawal of foreign forces from Iraq is complete, as a national day,”

said Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki. “It is Iraq’s day. It is a feast for all Iraqis. It is the dawn of a new day in Mesopotamia...Your country is free.” – *Reuters, December 31*