

# TERRORISM FOCUS

Volume V ■ Issue 32 ■ September 10, 2008

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### SOMALI MUJAHIDEEN CONFIRM AL-QAEDA SUSPECT ABU TALHA AL-SUDANI KILLED LAST YEAR

In a 24-minute audio statement, Salih al-Nabhan (a.k.a. Abu Yusuf), the leader of Somalia’s Shabaab al-Mujahideen movement, has confirmed the death of alleged leading al-Qaeda member Abu Talha al-Sudani (al-Sahab Media, August 31). Al-Nabhan is a Kenyan-born suspected al-Qaeda leader wanted for involvement in a Kenya hotel bombing in 2002 and an attempt to shoot down an Israeli airliner in Mombassa.

Abu Talha ranked near the top of the American list of wanted terrorists since his alleged involvement in the 1998 East African embassy bombings, the 2002 bombing of an Israeli-owned hotel in Kenya, and a 2003-2004 plot to attack U.S. forces at Djibouti’s Camp Lemonier. Abu Talha was a resident of Somalia since 1993 and was married to a Somali woman. He is alleged to have played a major part in arranging financing for al-Qaeda operations in East Africa.

Al-Nabhan confirmed the death of Abu Talha al-Sudani but provided few details: “A leader was martyred while he was leading one of the battalions of the mujahideen more than one year ago: Abu Talha al-Sudani, the leader of the mujahideen in Somalia. This is the first time that we have made this public.” Though no official claim for his death was made by American officials, *Time* learned last year from an anonymous Pentagon official that U.S. and Ethiopian intelligence had learned months later of his death

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1111 16th St., NW, Suite #320  
Washington, DC 20036  
T: (202) 483-8888  
F: (202) 483-8337  
<http://www.jamestown.org>

The Terrorism Focus is a fortnightly complement to Jamestown’s Terrorism Monitor, providing detailed and timely analysis of developments for policymakers and analysts, informing them of the latest trends in the War on Terror.

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during Ethiopian airstrikes along the Somali-Kenyan border in January 2007 (*Time*, November 29, 2007). Abu Talha had escaped an earlier targeted attack by U.S. AC-130 gunships (*Independent*, January 13, 2007).

The admission of his death came in an audiotape intended to attract African Muslims to the ranks of the Somali mujahideen, especially recruits from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Chad, and Nigeria: “Here are the training camps in Somalia and elsewhere that have opened their doors so that you join them. Hence, be truthful with God, answer the call of jihad, and prefer the lasting over the perishing and the next life over the present life.” The tape opened with a greeting from al-Nabhan to “the courageous commander and my honorable leader, Shaykh Osama bin Laden.”

Referring to the recent death of Shabaab leader Aden Hashi Ayro in a May 1 airstrike, al-Nabhan denounces American and Ethiopian attempts to target Somali resistance leaders: “They think, may God fight them, that the martyrdom of a commander shakes the pillars of jihad. They do not know that we are longing for death; the death of the martyrs.” Al-Nabhan claims the Somali mujahideen are awaiting reinforcement from Sudan and Yemen to combat the “Abyssinian [Ethiopian] rabble” occupying Somalia.

Al-Nabhan’s exhortations to the Somali people bear some of the ruthless approach to jihad found in the writings of the late Palestinian jihadist Abdullah Azzam (1941-1989), the inspiration for al-Qaeda: “It is not possible that the tree of jihad becomes steady on its trunk, except by sacrificing heads and souls cheap in the path of Allah, and the edifice of glory is not constructed, except with skulls and limbs, and indeed forfeiture, humiliation and degradation is in leaving jihad and succumbing to the colonialist Crusaders or contentment with fair [i.e. negotiated] solutions.”

The greeting to Bin Laden contained in the opening of the message raises new questions about Somali insurgent ties to al-Qaeda. Contrary to many reports that allege Somalia’s militants are closely tied to al-Qaeda if not controlled by them, U.S. ambassador to Somalia Michael E. Ranneberger has expressed reservations about a direct line of command from the al-Qaeda leadership to the Islamist militants in Somalia: “There are indications

of a fairly close Shabaab-Al Qaeda connection, though it’s not clear to what extent they’ve been operationalized... Shabaab taking orders from Al Qaeda? I would say no. They are still running their own show” (Mareeg Online, September 2).

#### ROUNDUP OF AZERBAIJAN’S “FOREST BROTHERS” FOLLOWS ATTACK ON BAKU MOSQUE

Azerbaijan’s Ministry of National Security (MNS) has arrested 13 members of the Islamist “Forest Brothers,” seizing weapons, ammunition, communications equipment, planning documents and maps in a combined operation involving a variety of Azeri security agencies (Azeri-Press Agency, September 2). One Special Forces member was killed and several wounded in fighting with several of the suspects. The Forest Brothers are a Salafi-Jihadi formation operating in southern Dagestan and the northern region of the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan in pursuit of an Islamic state governed by Sharia law. Many members of the organization are believed to have served under the late Rappani Khalilov, the former Amir of the Dagestani Front of the Caucasus resistance forces led by Chechen commander Dokku Umarov.

The group’s leader, Ilqar Mollaciyeu (a.k.a. Abdulmajid), his aide and relative Samir Mehdiyev (a.k.a. Sulayman) and two others are alleged to have crossed the border from Dagestan into Azerbaijan on July 19. At this point these men joined other militants deployed to Baku and Sumqayit to begin preparations for a jihad against the Azerbaijani government. According to security sources, the militants intended to create a Sumqayit Jamaat (Islamic community) responsible for raising funds through robberies in Baku. Following this the Quba-Qusar Jamaat would be formed to develop operational bases and ammunition depots in Azerbaijan’s mountainous north (Turan News Agency, September 2; Azeri-Press Agency, September 3; Interfax, September 3).

The MNS claims that some of the detainees have informed investigators that Mollaciyeu and Mehdiyev organized the August 17 grenade attack on Baku’s Abu Bakr mosque, though the motive remains unclear from available information (Turan News Agency, September 2; see also *Terrorism Focus*, September 2). The well-attended Abu Bakr mosque has been cited as a recruiting point for Islamists willing to fight in the Russian Caucasus, though

its imam (who was among those wounded in the grenade attack) is careful to publicly encourage cooperation with Azerbaijan's secular regime.

Though Azeri authorities have refrained from associating the "Forest Brothers" with Lezgin separatists in public statements, a statement from the Northern Region Department of the Azerbaijani State Committee for Religious Associations made an indirect reference to Lezgin associations with cross-border militants seeking a Lezgin state; "Ethnics living in the [Qusar] region know well that separatism does not benefit anyone. Law enforcement bodies are conducting necessary work to prevent their action" (Trend News Agency, September 2).

Kuwaiti Salafist missionaries made significant inroads in the Qusar region in the early 1990s (see *Terrorism Focus*, December 5, 2007). Lezgins form the vast majority in the region, where the Lezgin community was split from its Dagestani Lezgin counterparts by the creation of an international border between Dagestan and Azerbaijan in 1991. Most Lezgins are Sunni Muslims, while the majority of Azeris are Shi'a. The more secular Lezgin Sadval (Unity) Movement was responsible for a number of terrorist strikes in the 1990s and 2001 but has been relatively inactive since, never having gained popular support in the Lezgin community.

### **Jihadis Discuss Means of Poisoning the Water Supply of Denmark and Great Britain**

A major jihadi internet forum has posted a terrorist plot to use chemical and biological agents to contaminate water resources in Europe in general and Great Britain and Denmark in particular, the latter in retaliation for insulting the Prophet Muhammad through publication of the infamous "Muhammad cartoons." The posting, entitled "Back Breaking Blow to Denmark, the U.K, and the European Union," discussed ways of poisoning water resources and reservoirs to cause mass killings (al-ekhlaas.net, August 16). Even though many forum participants consented to the plan and participated with ideas on the kind of chemical agents that might be used in such attacks, some forum members disagreed with the terror plan, arguing that mass killing has neither religious justification nor a fatwa (religious ruling) to authorize

it. The anti-attack forum members appeared to have a strong case from a religious standpoint, leading to a protracted discussion lasting over a week.

A forum member nicknamed Baghdad al-Khilafa, with over a thousand postings, primarily on weapons and explosives, proposed the terror attack to retaliate for Denmark's mockery of the Prophet Muhammad, to terrorize the enemy's ranks, and to ease the infidels' onslaught on Muslims in Iraq, Afghanistan, Morocco, Somalia, Eastern Turkistan (Xinjiang) and Chechnya. The objective of the plan was to kill as many civilians as possible by contaminating the main water supply pipelines in any of the major cities in the Europe with chemical substances.

The stages of the plot were outlined as follows:

- Collect intelligence on the target and determine the right timing for execution. This involves reconnaissance, casing facilities and frequenting the target country.
- Distract and avoid security forces at the target. A mock operation is created to divert attention from the original target.
- Use one fair-skinned blonde jihadi to execute the attack and leave the country immediately after perpetration.
- Use a highly poisonous chemical substance to contaminate the water supply.
- The terror plot stirred strong interest among forum participants who requested execution plans, ways to reach the target country and further details on producing the chemical substances.

Al-Khilafa later posted links to a file hosting website - megaupload.com - that contains material on explosives and poison production manuals. A wide range of chemical substances to be used in the attack was offered by al-Khilafa and other forum participants. The list included, among others, cyanide, hydrocyanic acid, potassium cyanide, aniline hydrochloride, sodium nitrite, cobalt chloride, cobalt nitrite, and the highly toxic compound thallium, known as "the poisoner's poison."

Forum members discussed methods of producing and using chemical substances. Al-Khilafa posted experimental results of his own observations of the effects of these poisons on mice.

A forum member nicknamed Al-Bara Bin Malik suggested a number of poisonous gases that could be used in an attack, such as chlorine gas, mustard gas, hydrogen cyanide and nerve gas. Although Malik did not explain methods of launching the poisonous gases, he claimed they are easy to prepare and asked the other chatters to speculate on ways of developing aerosol distribution systems. Other chatters posted photos of water pipelines, water towers, and diagrams illustrating ways to inject the chemical substances into the water system. One participant, a mechanical engineer nicknamed Athab al-Qabir, suggested attacks are possible through valves or ventilation openings.

On the other hand, a forum participant nicknamed Noon questioned the religious justification of such operations and asked for the fatwa that would authorize massive attacks killing innocent men, women and children, including Muslims living in Europe. Infuriated by Noon's opposition, the majority of forum members rebuked him, quoting their own interpretation of Quranic verses and various Hadiths they claimed supported mass killings. The debate went on for a week, intensified by Noon's logical replies citing Quranic verses and many Hadiths he interpreted as prohibiting the terror plot from a religious jurisprudence perspective. The majority of forum members ignored Noon's reasoning and continued exchanging information pertinent to the terror plot.

Most jihadi websites are dominated by Salafi-Jihadi extremists who propagate extreme rhetoric and call for the indiscriminate mass killing of infidels and non-adherents of "al-wala' wa al-bara'" (Loyalty [to Islam] and Disavowal [to its Enemies]).

Moderate Salafis nonetheless often succeed in dissuading indecisive Islamists in the forums from carrying out extremist violence by challenging the militants with strong arguments they cannot refute. Moderate Salafis are probably the most capable of engaging and exposing the false practice of Salafi-Jihadi extremists; unfortunately, moderates rarely jump into debate with extremists for fear of being accused of apostasy.

*Abdul Hameed Bakier is an intelligence expert on counter-terrorism, crisis management and terrorist-hostage negotiations. He is based in Jordan.*

## Is the PKK Seeking New Bases in the Turkish Interior?

As of August 2008, it appears that operations of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan – PKK) have shifted toward a strip of Turkish territory crossing through Tunceli, Bingol, Mus, and Bitlis provinces, a region where the PKK previously conducted limited activities. The following incidents clearly demonstrate a rise in PKK activity in this strip:

- August 2 – three separate improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were detected in the Tunceli town of Hozat.
- August 5 – a large clash erupted between Turkish security forces and the PKK in Tunceli's Pulumur Valley.
- August 6 – another clash occurred in the region between the Tunceli town of Nizamiye and the town of Malazgirt in Mus province.
- August 11 – PKK militants ambushed a military convoy and killed nine soldiers near Kemah town of Erzincan province (bordering Tunceli province).
- August 24 – two civilians were kidnapped in Genc town of Bingol province.
- August 26 – 15 PKK members were killed in the town of Mutki in Bitlis province.
- August 31 – the PKK killed 4 soldiers in Bingol's Yesilsu town.
- September 3 – two soldiers were killed in the town of Kigi in Bingol province (*Hurriyet*, August 3 – September 7).

The PKK's activities in August and early September were, of course, not limited to these attacks and clashes. However, since the mid-1990s the PKK has not previously increased its activities to this level of intensity in this geographic strip. What could explain the PKK's sudden intensification of activity in this region?



A simple deduction would lead us to believe that PKK activities in its traditionally dominant region, located along the Turkish-Iraqi border and rural parts of Batman and Diyarbakir provinces, had been successfully limited by operations of the Turkish Gendarmerie and Armed Forces (Turk Silahlı Kuvvetleri – TSK), with the PKK having to move its units into the Tunceli, Bingol, Mus, and Bitlis strip. However, the PKK’s terror activities in this region do not seem to indicate that the PKK is escaping from a region where its activities are limited to establish new bases in another region. The PKK has not just been carrying out passive operations, such as planting IEDs in deep valleys and waiting for military convoys to hit them. Instead, the PKK has been organizing bold offensive operations, including attacks on police stations, military barracks, and even the kidnapping of civilians. Thus, the nature of the PKK’s recent activities in this new operational region needs to be examined.

Three interrelated answers can be offered. The first deals with geographic concerns. As shown in the accompanying map, the strip marked in red is composed of high mountains and deep valleys where the PKK can easily operate. Indeed, this terrain was one of the most active areas of operation for the PKK throughout the 1990s. What remains to be answered, however, is why the PKK has begun to concentrate its activities in this region. Why not last year, or any other time since 2004 when the PKK ended its unilateral ceasefire? An interesting argument was raised during an interview with a provincial governor in this strip: “In my opinion the PKK does not consider its camps in northern Iraq as safe havens to spend the winter season.... Thus, [the PKK] are in search of new places to spend the winter” (Phone interview with the Governor of Mus, September 8). It was reported that the joint PKK group that killed four soldiers in Bingol on August 31 came from the camps in northern Iraq, Tunceli and Erzurum provinces (*Milliyet*, August 31). This may suggest that the groups from these areas are intended to be the pioneers in establishing new safe refuges for the winter season. If indeed the PKK is in search of safe

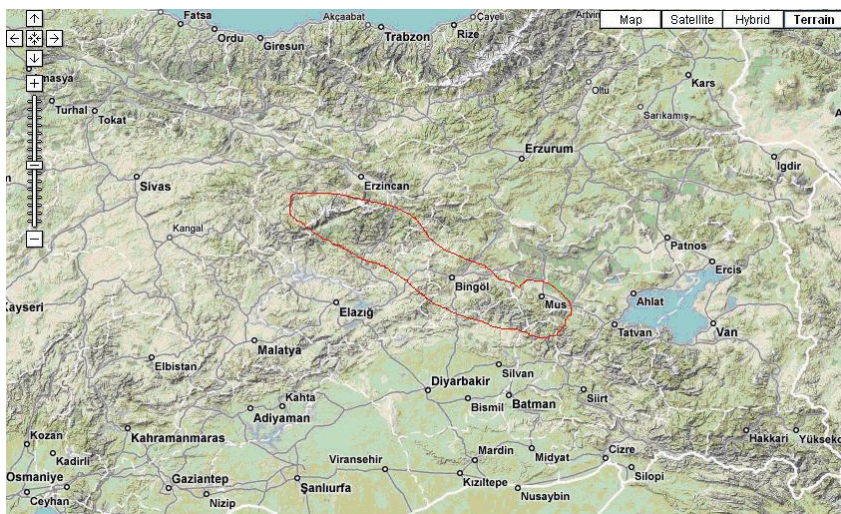
bases (at least for some of its members), it demonstrates that the Turkish military has been very successful in its land and aerial operations against PKK bases in northern Iraq.

The second reason behind the PKK’s intensification of activities in this strip could be related to the demographics of the region. The strip is densely populated by Alevi Kurdish communities. Unlike Sunni Kurds, the Alevi do not practice orthodox Islam, but instead follow a syncretistic amalgam of Shi’ism, Sufism and pre-Islamic beliefs. Kurdish Alevi in this region have a mixed reaction toward the PKK’s terror campaign. In the 1980s the Alevi distanced themselves from the PKK because they considered the PKK a Sunni-based organization. Many Alevi support Turkey’s state secularism as an alternative to Sunni domination. Nevertheless, the PKK established successful ties with some Alevi communities in the region beginning in the early 1990s. Earlier this year, imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan suggested his followers open a new chapter in developing better relations with the Alevi communities. In March, Ocalan suggested a new

focus on “democratic politics” and the establishment of a Democratic Politics and Alevi Culture Academy in Dersim (Rojaciwan, March 4). Ocalan thinks that Alevism has entered a “degenerated” and fragmented state. Thus, serious research has to be conducted on Alevism and Alevi culture to reverse its fragmented nature (Rojaciwan.

com, March 4, 2008). Last July it was reported that the PKK has established an Alevi Academy, where the PKK will seek to reconstruct Alevism along the lines of the PKK’s Kurdish nationalist project (*Hurriyet*, July 13). The goal is to unify Alevi and Sunni Kurds under the umbrella of a Kurdish national identity.

The PKK’s recent activities in this region could also be related with this approach. It is a classic method of the PKK to intensify terror activities in a region by bringing ordinary people into a confrontation with the state. Most of the PKK’s recent attacks on Turkish security forces



have been carried out near Alevi villages or towns. Given that it is a sensitive issue for both the Alevi communities and the Turkish state to examine the PKK's relationship with the Alevi communities, a number of terrorism experts within Turkey are still in agreement that provocation is a well-known PKK tactic for bringing the heavy hand of state security forces into a region where the organization wishes to establish roots (Author's interviews, Ankara, Diyarbakir, Batman, and Bingol, August 8).

The third reason behind the new geographic focus could be part of a PKK strategy to ease the intense pressure created by the military activities of the TSK along and across the Turkey-Iraq border.

If the PKK continues to concentrate its attacks in the Tunceli, Bingol, Mus, and Bitlis strip, Turkish security forces will have to implement counter-terrorism strategies in this region that could harm the Alevi communities' relations with the state. Further terrorist attacks in this region could draw the Turkish public's attention from northern Iraq to the Turkish interior as a source of separatist terrorism.

*Emrullah Uslu is a Turkish terrorism expert and currently a PhD candidate at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Utah.*

## **Bosnian Authorities Face Charges Over Transfer of "Algerian Six" to Guantanamo**

Former Bosnian officials who handed over six members of the so-called "Algerian Group" to U.S. authorities, who in turn transferred them to the Guantanamo Bay military detention center, are facing an inquiry into their actions, which the Sarajevo Prosecutor's Office describes as illegal.

The Prosecutor's Office launched the inquiry in late June, accusing former Bosnian officials – including former Social Democratic Party (SDP) leader and foreign minister Zlatko Lagumdžija, former deputy interior minister Tomilav Limov and various employees of the Sarajevo prison – of illegally handing the six suspects to U.S. authorities in January 2002. The six had already been acquitted of terrorism-related charges by a Bosnian court for lack of evidence.

Members of the Algerian Group are still being held without charge at Guantanamo Bay. Unlike many other Guantanamo detainees, the six were not caught while engaged in a combat situation in Afghanistan, nor is there any known evidence that they fought in Afghanistan at any time. The United States suspects the six Algerian-born naturalized Bosnian citizens of ties to Algeria's Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA). The Sarajevo Prosecutor's Office timed its mid-June inquiry to coincide with a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to grant Guantanamo detainees the possibility of challenging their detention in a U.S. federal court.

According to the office of Chief Canton Prosecutor Branko Slijivar, the former Bosnian officials are accused of unlawful deprivation of freedom and violation of rights. "Their acts were motivated by ethnic discrimination since the injured parties belonged to a Semitic group, originating from African and Asian countries," the prosecution said (*Oslobodjenje* [Sarajevo], July 25).

The opposition SDP, however, insists that the case was a "classic political witch-hunt by the Sarajevo Canton Prosecution" in advance of the upcoming October 5 local elections. "It's indicative that the investigation is only being launched against two SDP members while key members of other political parties, now in the government, who were most responsible, have been left untouched," the SDP said in a statement to local media (*Oslobodjenje*, July 27).

The six Algerians – Bensayah Belkacem, Boudella el Hajj, Lakhdar Boumediene, Sabir Mahfouz Lahmar, Mustafa Ait Idr and Mohammad Nechle – were arrested in October 2001 on suspicion of plotting attacks against the U.S. and British embassies in Sarajevo. The embassies at the time were temporarily closed due to a perceived security threat emanating from intelligence indicating possible terrorist attacks. After Bosnian authorities arrested the six, an investigation showed five of the six had gained Bosnian citizenship fraudulently. Local authorities revoked these citizenships (and the permanent residency status of the sixth suspect) in January 2002, shortly after their arrest.

Later that month, a Bosnian court cleared them of all charges, citing lack of evidence. But just hours before releasing them from custody, Bosnian authorities were pressured to hand them over to U.S. authorities, who then transferred them to Guantanamo Bay.

Early next month, the Algerian six will be given a one-day chance to present their cases before a U.S. federal court, most likely via video link from Guantanamo. At the same time, U.S. authorities will be called on to provide concrete evidence to support the continued detention without charges of the Algerian Group. Should this fail, judges could order their release. It is expected that the court will make a ruling by the end of the year.

Robert Kirsch, the legal adviser to the six, told reporters he was preparing a list of witnesses for the hearing, and that the group already had prepared recorded and written testimonies. "There are persons from the former Bosnian government who were present when the decision was made to hand over the six to the U.S. They knew about the pressure and blackmail from the US government, such as [from] Christopher Hoh of the US embassy, who threatened to withdraw US financial and military support from Bosnia if the six were not handed over," Kirsch said (*Dnevni Avaz* [Sarajevo], September 4).

Kirsch also said that the U.S. government had already given the court the official charges and evidence, but classified the documents as top secret. Kirsch believes that the only evidence against the six was their connection to Islamic aid organizations suspected of ties to terrorist groups. *The Washington Post* reported on August 21, 2006, that U.S. charges that the six were planning to bomb the U.S. embassy had been dropped from their files.

Kirsch, who took the case in 2004, claims that at the time of their arrest, the six "didn't even know each other. Some of these men met for the first time in Guantanamo... I find myself where I was four years ago: trying to get someone in our government to explain why these men are being held... My clients have been a vehicle for a global civics lesson on the rule of law" (*Monadnock Ledger-Transcript* [Peterborough New Hampshire, August 5]).

A retired Bosnian Federation intelligence agent who led the case against the six told the Jamestown Foundation (on condition of anonymity) that some of those arrested had been either in contact with, or close associates of, Osama bin Laden and other high-ranking al-Qaeda figures, including Zayn al-Abidin Muhammad Husayn (a.k.a. Abu Zubaydah), who was tasked with recruiting veteran fighters from Afghanistan for the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia. Zubaydah is currently being held at Guantanamo. However, this information was based on U.S. intelligence reports. Bosnian judicial records indicated no phone

records of calls to Abu Zubaydah, and U.S. authorities refused to share the transcripts they said would verify the claims (*Washington Post*, August 21).

The handover of the Algerian Six to the U.S. forces in Bosnia was part of Bosnia's effort to join the War on Terrorism, an effort initiated and pressed upon Bosnia by the United States. At the time Bosnia was ruled by the moderate SDP and not the Bosniak Nationalist Party (BNP), which had supported the arrival of foreign fighters from Muslim countries during the civil war. Had the BNP been in power, the handover likely would never have taken place. The case remains significant in Bosnia as it is being used as political fuel against the SDP as elections approach. If their case reaches a U.S. Federal Court, a possible ruling for release could also set a precedent for judicial proceedings related to the War on Terrorism.

*Anes Alic is the Executive Director of ISA Consulting, www.isaintel.com.*

## Playing With Fire: Pakistan's Unintended Strategic Challenge in India's Homeland

By Michael Scheuer

Having examined India's Afghan policy as a challenge meant to undermine Pakistani security (see *Terrorism Focus*, August 12), this article examines Pakistan's low-intensity war against India which, while long ongoing, has been effectively broadened since the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan and India's expanding presence there. Pakistani covert operations alone would never have posed a threat to Indian security and stability, but rising anti-Hindu sentiments among India's 150-million-strong Muslim community have complemented Pakistani operations and enhanced the threat posed to India's communal harmony and economy, a result that likewise increases the chances of an unintended India-Pakistan war.

Since Pakistan's independence in 1947, a central goal of Pakistani governments has been bringing an end to New Delhi's political control of the Muslim-dominated



Kashmir region of India's Jammu and Kashmir state (J&K). Pakistani policy has tended to look toward eventually annexing the region to the Pakistani state, while the sentiments of India's Kashmiri Muslims have shown no unanimity on the issue, with some supporting annexation and others preferring the formation of an independent Muslim state. Islamabad's support of Kashmiri separatists has included political support, agitation at the UN, funding for separatist organizations, and – especially since General Zia's tenure as Pakistan's president – the training and arming of Kashmiri Islamist insurgents.

Pakistan's Kashmir policy has never been framed as an effort to “defeat” India. The policy has rather been a combination of religious obligation – helping to free brother Muslims dominated by polytheist Hindus – and overall defense policy, with the latter probably being the dominant motivation. Islamabad's support for the Kashmiris provided an outlet for the free-Kashmir ardor of the country's Islamist political parties and served to tie down an inordinate number of India's military forces in J&K. Faced with India's overwhelming superiority in military manpower, Pakistan believed that its interests were favored by a military equation that saw the largest possible number of Indian troops diverted away from a possible Indian strike force aimed at Pakistan and toward internal security operations. Islamabad also believed that it could calibrate and control this policy, thereby avoiding a situation where Muslim dissident activities in Kashmir might lead to a conventional war between Pakistan and India.[1]

The above policy formulation largely met Islamabad's goals until the Afghan jihad ended with the fall of Muahmmad Najibullah's communist regime in Kabul in April, 1992. Thereafter, Islamabad's policy remained more-or-less constant, but several other influences made J&K an increasingly dangerous Indo-Pak flashpoint. For one, the Afghan mujahideen's victory over the USSR inspired Islamists across the Muslim world; for Kashmiri militants it suddenly became conceivable that – if Moscow could be beaten – perhaps New Delhi was not invincible. Second, a moderate number of Pakistani and Indian Kashmiris received training and combat experience in Afghanistan during the anti-Soviet war and believed they were ready to fight Indian forces. Third, Islamist NGO's from the Arabian Peninsula looked for post-Afghan jihad causes to support and fund, with Kashmiri separatism near the top of their agenda. Fourth, al-Qaeda, after its

formation in 1988, took a strong interest in the fortunes of Kashmiri Islamists and sought to assist them after the Soviet withdrawal.

Each of these factors lessened Islamabad's ability to effectively regulate the violence in Kashmir and thereby limit chances for a military confrontation with India; other forces – some richer and more influential than Pakistan – provided the Kashmiris with other support options if Islamabad tightened the spigot. This less predictable but still manageable situation was dramatically worsened, however, by the mid-1980s rise of a force entirely beyond Pakistani control; that is, Hindu nationalism and cultural chauvinism – termed Hinduvatu in India. The formation and rapid growth of Lal Krishna Advani's Indian People's Party (Bharatiya Janata Party -BJP) and the simultaneous expansion of the Mumbai-based Shiv Sena (Army of Shiva) organization's political power and influence began to challenge the secular nature of the Indian state in a manner that was unabashedly anti-Muslim. The turning point in India's Hindu-Muslim communal relations began in 1990 when Hindu fundamentalists occupied the ancient Babri Mosque in the city of Ayodha and then destroyed it in 1992. This event was followed by a Shiv Sena-led anti-Muslim pogrom in Mumbai in December 1992 - January 1993, which was responded to by the serial bombings of predominantly Hindu targets in Mumbai by Dawood Ibrahim's D-Company criminal organization – assisted by Pakistan's ISI – in March, 1993.[2] Thereafter, and certainly by the late 1990s, India's response to Kashmir's Islamist insurgents and Pakistan's support for them took on the more bellicose tone pressed on New Delhi by the Hindu fundamentalists. Hindu-nationalist leaders also effectively pushed for the imposition of domestic policies – especially in the area of counterterrorism - that widened the Hindu-Muslim communal divide and created fertile ground for the growth of anti-Hindu Islamist militancy and organizations in India.

Since the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan has continued its covert operations in J&K and – probably as a response to India's greatly expanded Afghan presence – has sought to simultaneously create an insurgent/terrorist capability across India, attack the booming Indian economy, and better hide its hand while doing both. ISI has long worked with several Islamist insurgent/terrorist groups that are active in Kashmir and Bangladesh – especially the Lashkar-e-Tayiba (LeT), Jaysh-e-Muhammad (JeM), and Harakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami-Bangladeshi (HUJI-B) – but these organizations lacked both an all-India presence



and the ability to build one. According to Indian security officials, however, Pakistan and the ISI have used Dawood Ibrahim's Karachi-based D-Company and the Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) to provide the contacts, safe houses, and front organizations needed to allow LeT, JeM, and HUJI-B to become all-India threats. The recent terrorist operations in Bangalore, Ahmedabad, and Surat (July 25-27), for example, are thought by Indian security officials to have been made possible by the support of D-Company and SIMI for the aforementioned terrorist groups (outlookindia.com, August 11-17).

Pakistan's economic undermining of India's economy also seems to be executed by the same set of organizations. Islamabad's major tool for this aspect of its low-intensity campaign is counterfeit Indian currency, what New Delhi calls Fake Indian Currency Notes or FICN. The FICN are printed on high-quality security paper similar to that used by New Delhi; is all-but indistinguishable from genuine Indian currency; and is moved into the country by LeT, JeM, HUJI-B, and D-Company members before being distributed across India (*Times of India*, August 29). Some current estimates show that up to a quarter of the Indian currency in circulation could be FICN, and Indian officials worry that this fact may account for part of the country's high inflation rate and may lead to decreased confidence in New Delhi's ability to protect the credibility of its currency. Indian officials also believe that the profits derived from the sale of FICN are being used to fund Islamist activities in J&K and perhaps elsewhere in India (*Kashmiri Herald*, July 10; *Asia Times*, August 25).

Finally, Pakistan clearly has been able to better hide its hand in its operations inside India. Indian security officials term the process by which Islamabad has accomplished this goal as "indigenization," meaning that more and more terrorist, insurgent, and economic-sabotage operations in the country are being carried out by Indians and not by Pakistanis or Bangladeshis sent across the border by ISI (Rediff.com, July 27).

The difference between the attacks by Islamists in Kashmir and the more recent attacks in India is that, whereas the former involved either foreigners or "hardcore" locals, the latter involve individuals and cells from a broader section of India's Muslim population (ISN, Zurich, June 13).

While all intelligence agencies try to hide their hand in covert operations – that is, after all, what makes them covert – Pakistan's ISI should not be given too much, or even a majority of the credit for indigenization. Much of that dubious honor probably should be awarded to the rising power and influence of the Hindu nationalist parties in India politics. Muslims have in recent history been second-class citizens in India, but since the rise of the Hindu chauvinists their marginalization has deepened. India's Muslims are less educated, less employed, less healthy, and – in the last decade – less protected than Hindus; after an Islamist attack in spring 2002, for example, more than 2,000 Muslims were killed in Gujarat state by rioting Hindus as police and local government officials stood by and watched (*Guardian*, August 7).

So far in 2008, the radicalization of anti-Muslim Hindu politics in India has increased, and most terrorist attacks have occurred in Indian states ruled by the Hindu-nationalist BJP party (MeriNews.com, July 31). After last July's terrorist attacks, for example, Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray – the man who managed the above-noted 1993 anti-Muslim riots in Mumbai – called on Indian authorities to use an "iron hand ... this kind of barbarism was characteristic only of the Moghul [Muslim] invaders." Vaguely urging a violent Hindu response, Thackeray added that "Hindus will be digging their own graves if they remain defensive in the face of these attacks" (*Times of India*, July 30).

Then, perhaps unwittingly, New Delhi added fuel and credibility to Thackeray's incendiary statements. On August 12, India's National Security Adviser, M.K. Narayanan, told the media that there are "800 terrorist cells" operating in the country, each with "external support" and "almost all of the terror cells being headed by Muslims" (*Times of India*, August 12).

Islamabad and the ISI now seem to be riding the tiger they created, rather than controlling it. The cost of success in hiding Pakistan's hand in operations in India is Islamabad's growing lack of control over the targets, scale, and pace of attacks by its Islamist and criminal allies in that country. Pakistan probably can still exert some control over these factors among Kashmiri Islamist insurgents in J&K, but Islamist activities, violent and otherwise, elsewhere in India appear to be beyond Pakistan's full control and ISI's leash.

In India, the piper's bill appears to be coming due for New Delhi's attempts to appease growing Hindu chauvinism, the net impact of which appears only to have made the BJP a likely partner in the national government formed after the next parliamentary elections. The response of New Delhi to terrorist attacks and the growing popularity of the Hindu nationalists' anti-Muslim agenda are resulting in a greater "communal polarization," enraging Muslim Indians and making their support for Muslim "self-defense" more likely (*Indian Express*, July 21, 2006). "The indigenous Islamists," Indian social scientist Pradip Bose recently wrote, "have thrived on Muslim alienation since the phenomenal rise of the Hindu right in the country in the mid-1980s ... so there is no use blaming the 'foreign hand.' We in this country have created this problem" (BBC, May 14). There is little doubt, however, that for the foreseeable future, and no matter which party or parties govern India, New Delhi will allot the major share of responsibility for Islamist-conducted domestic terrorism to Pakistan and ISI.

*Michael Scheuer served in the CIA for 22 years before resigning in 2004. He served as the Chief of the bin Laden Unit at the Counterterrorist Center from 1996 to 1999. He is the once anonymous author of Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror; his most recent book is Marching Toward Hell: America and Islam After Iraq. Dr. Scheuer is a Senior Fellow with The Jamestown Foundation.*

Thus, the traditional measured, tit-for-tat intelligence struggle between Pakistan and India is being eclipsed by a scenario in which neither Islamabad nor New Delhi can be certain of controlling post-terrorist-attack events. If Islamist terrorists/insurgents – whether acting alone or with Pakistani aid – strike an Indian target of heretofore unprecedented economic importance or one that produces huge and mostly Hindu casualties, the road to war may be quite short. For two nuclear-armed and mortal antagonists, this is a new and very dangerous level of unpredictability.

Notes:

1. A detailed analysis of Pakistani policy and ISI actions can be found in Shaun Gregory's, "The ISI and the War on Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 30, pp. 1013-1031.
2. The events of this period are recounted and incisively discussed in S. Hussain Zaidi, *Black Friday: The True Story of the Bombay Bomb Blasts*, New Delhi, 2002.