



# Terrorism Monitor

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## PKK Tactics May Reveal Damage Caused by Turkish Military Campaign

By Emrullah Uslu

The fighting between Turkish security forces and the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) has intensified in recent months. Turkish air raids on the PKK camps in northern Iraq have resumed since mid-July. Between July 10 to July 16, 36 PKK members were killed, and there were reports the PKK's military commander, Fehman Hüseyin (a.k.a. Dr. Bahoz Erdal), was seriously wounded in one of the air strikes (*Hurriyet*, July 18). Huseyin has not appeared in any pro-PKK media outlet since mid-July despite PKK denials of his injuries (*Yeni Safak*, July 18). At the end of the month, Turkish fighter jets hit a cave believed to be used as a bunker in the Quandil Mountains, killing 30 to 40 PKK members who took refuge there (*Hurriyet*, July 30). Turkish fighter jets also carried out three major raids (July 23, 27, and 29) against PKK camps in the Qandil Mountains and the Zap district of northern Iraq. For the month of July overall, the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) claimed between 75 to 100 PKK members killed in various operations carried out by Turkish security forces ([tsk.mil.tr](http://tsk.mil.tr), press releases for July).

To counter these attacks, the PKK has intensified its operations against Turkish security forces. One pattern is clear: in its recent attacks, the PKK has targeted not only military convoys and barracks in rural areas but also civilians and police stations in city centers. The Kurdish militants even threatened to set fire to forests in the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Marmara regions.

## Recent Trends in PKK Operations

Beginning in mid-June, there was a visible increase in the PKK's attacks on police stations in towns and city centers:

- On June 15, the PKK organized a rocket attack on a Hakkari police compound where families of police officers live (*Hurriyet*, June 15).
- On July 2, the PKK attacked the Guroymak police station in Bitlis province (Anadolu Ajansi, July 2);
- On July 9, a police station in Cemiskezek town of Tunceli province came under attack (polis-haber.com, July 9).
- On July 25, the PKK attacked a Yuksekova police post in Hakkari province (*Milliyet*, July 25).
- On July 28, another attack on a police station took place in Bingol province (*Radikal*, July 28).

Though such attacks were common in the terror campaign of the 1990s, they have been rare in recent years. Yet recent trends clearly show that, in addition to assaulting military barracks in towns and cities, the PKK has concentrated its operations in or around the city centers. In fact, the People's Defense Forces (Hezen Parastina Gel - HPG), the armed wing of the PKK, announced that "the organization is punishing the police officers who terrorize the Kurds in the region" (hpg-online.com, August 2). The PKK, however, has not achieved any major success in these attacks in terms of killing police officers or soldiers.

The PKK's focus on city centers stems partly from America's provision of actionable real-time intelligence to the TSK. This has made PKK movement difficult and has interfered with the group's ability to organize hit and run attacks on military convoys, which it used to carry out in previous years in rural areas. Moreover, the air raids in northern Iraq have significantly destroyed the PKK's long-range radio communications. In the last two years, the TSK has bought jammers and other electronic equipment to improve its electronic prevention capacity against remote-controlled IED attacks. Thus, the PKK's ability to mount IED attacks has significantly decreased compared to 2006 and 2007.

## Are Forest Fires a Part of the PKK's Strategy?

Despite the advantages it has brought to the Turkish security forces, it would be a mistake to reach the conclusion that intelligence gathering from American sources and Turkey's own extensive use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) will be enough to tip the fighting in the TSK's favor. The UAVs have their own weaknesses. Although the majority of the mountains in Kurdish region are not covered by thick forests, the surface of some mountains and valleys where PKK militants operate are densely forested, allowing PKK militants to move from one place to another unobserved.

In order to prevent PKK movement underneath the forest canopy without being detected by unmanned aircrafts, the TSK has taken measures, including thinning dense forests. The regional director of forests in Elazig province admits that "for security reasons, the TSK asks us to thin some dense forests by cutting out some of the trees. We help the TSK by cutting out the forests. However, in some areas the PKK has put pressure on us not to thin dense forests. In those places where we are not able to thin out the trees, bombs cause fires during the counter-terror operations. Because of the landmines, we are not even able to control such forest fires" (*Taraf*, July 27).

In July alone, more than 20 forest fires were reported in the Kurdish region. In response to the blazes, the HPG announced: "If the intentionally set forest fires continue in the Kurdish region, the Kurds will retaliate by turning the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Marmara regions (all Western parts of the country) into a hell" (hpg-online.com, July 27). It could be a deliberate effort of PKK sympathizers or just a coincidence that on July 29, two days after the HPG's declaration, a forest fire began in Canakkale province (Marmara region) and another began in Antalya province (Mediterranean region) (cnnturk.com, July 29). Turkey's biggest forest fire began on July 31 in Antalya province, a popular tourism destination for European vacationers, burning 4500 hectares of forest (cnnturk.com, August 5).

## Attacks against Civilians

In addition to assaults against the security forces, two bombs exploded on July 26 in the shopping district of Gungoren, a suburb of Istanbul. The bomb explosions killed 18 civilians, including a pregnant woman and children, and wounded 154 others, causing a great outrage throughout Turkey. Police detained eight suspects who have ties to the PKK and are believed to

be involved in the bombing attack (*Hurriyet*, August 2). The PKK immediately denied any involvement in the Gungoren bombing, and some critical media outlets raised questions about whether the bombing was indeed an act of the PKK (rojaciwan.com, August 3; *Taraf*, August 5). The Turkish Interior minister and the governor of Istanbul both, nonetheless, went before the public and clearly stated that without a doubt that the Gungoren bombing was carried out by PKK members trained in the Qandil mountains (*Milliyet*, August 5).

In the past, the PKK has denied its involvement in a bombing if it appeared the attack would harm its image at the national and international level, even if PKK militants were involved. For instance, the PKK initially rejected its involvement in the suicide attack in Ankara in May 2007 which killed 7 civilians and wounded 60 others (*Hurriyet*, May 22, 2007). PKK spokesmen later admitted “the possibility that the action may have been carried out by a unit loyal to our forces, on their own initiative” (Firat News Agency, January 7). In January 2008, a PKK member detonated a car bomb in Diyarbakir which killed 5 students and wounded 67 civilians (*Radikal*, January 4, 2008). In this incident PKK leaders also rejected any involvement at first, but later claimed the attack while announcing that it was “a mistake” (*Sabah*, February 5, 2008).

### Sabotaging the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline

On August 5 it was reported that a large explosion had knocked out the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline in Erzincan province (*Zaman*, August 6). Immediately after the explosion, the HPG claimed responsibility for sabotaging the pipeline, which carries Azeri crude to European markets (hpg-online.com, August 6). The attack seemed to fulfill a 2006 statement by senior PKK leader Murat Karayilan: “I would say that in these days the BTC pipeline is not one of our targets. However, if the Turkish state extends its attacks on the Kurds, and situations on the ground significantly change, we could consider the BTC as a target” (gundemonline.net. July 17, 2006). Oil prices rose after the attack (Bloomberg.com, August 6). If in fact the explosion was the result of PKK sabotage, then we should assume that the situation on the ground has significantly changed for the PKK to begin targeting international investments in the region.

### Conclusion

In terms of numbers lost in the TSK-PKK battle, it is impossible to obtain independent verification of the

claims coming from either side. However, one of the most important aspects of the TSK’s campaign has been the infliction of significant damage to the communications capacity of the PKK. With growing U.S. surveillance and intelligence sharing, the PKK’s military leaders have started avoiding the use of telephones. Moreover, the PKK’s long range radio communication infrastructure was seriously damaged. Thus, starting from the beginning of 2008, the PKK may have relocated militants with training on how to prepare and detonate bombs to the metropolises and told them to detonate bombs whenever they find it suitable.

If bombing attacks such as the one in Gungoren are not planned by the PKK’s central authorities, it could signal a growing weakness in the PKK’s command and control structure. The PKK is traditionally known for its rigid top-down command structure. In order to keep the organization intact and to maintain discipline, PKK leaders have not hesitated in the past to kill senior militants who deviate from the command structure, such as Kani Yilmaz and Hikmet Fidan, who left the organization to form a nonviolent alternative group, the Patriotic Democratic Party (Partiya Welatparezen Demokratên Kurdistan – WPD-K)<sup>1</sup>. If the recent bombing in Istanbul were carried out without approval from the PKK leadership, it could be a sign that the PKK’s strict hierarchy no longer controls its members. Except for the May 6 assault on the Aktutun border station, the PKK’s recent assaults on police stations and military barracks have not produced any significant damage to Turkish security forces. Undeterred by these small-scale attacks, Turkish security forces have intensified their counter-terror campaign within Turkey’s borders and northern Iraq, which, at the very least, should provide a psychological advantage over the PKK.

Given the present sensitivity of international markets to even minor disruptions in oil supply, the PKK attack on the BTC pipeline risks raising international anger against the PKK cause. Nations on the receiving end of the BTC supply are unlikely to tolerate the PKK as a destabilizing force in their vital energy corridors. The attack suggests the PKK may now be in such a difficult position that it is prepared to gamble with its very existence against the international community.

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1 “Chronology of the Important Events in the World/PKK Chronology (1976-2006)”, Journal of the Turkish Weekly, May 27, 2007.

## Terrorism and Piracy: The Dual Threat to Maritime Shipping

By John Daly

In the global war on terror, international attention has largely been focused on terrestrial operations, but the sea remains a fertile ground for attack. As in many terror attacks in Afghanistan and Iraq, the favored tool of maritime terrorists is the suicide bomber, piloting a small vessel into the intended target. The two terrorist groups most responsible for maritime attacks are al-Qaeda and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which have attacked both warships and merchantmen.

Al-Qaeda's most notable success in deploying this technique was its devastating attack on the USS *Cole* (DDG 67) in Aden on October 12, 2000. The attack killed 17 sailors and injured 39 others, leaving the vessel with a 40 by 60 foot hole in its port side; repairs to the vessel cost nearly \$250 million. Two years later, on October 6, 2002, al-Qaeda bombers in a small boat filled with explosives rammed the French tanker *Limburg* at Mukalla, 354 miles east of Aden, as it was approaching the Ash Shihr Terminal several miles off the Yemeni coast. The attack killed one crewman and spilled 90,000 barrels of oil from the vessel's 397,000-barrel cargo. The U.S. Navy's Maritime Liaison Office (MARLO) in Bahrain issued an advisory noting: "Shipmasters should exercise extreme caution when transiting...strategic chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz, or Bab el-Mandeb, or...traditional high-threat areas such as along the Horn of Africa." The *Limburg* attack caused insurance premiums for Yemeni ports to triple overnight as Lloyd's of London declared Yemeni waters a war zone; container traffic fell by 90 percent and 3,000 jobs were lost as a result, costing Yemen \$15 million per month.

### Cooperation in Naval Terrorism?

Four months before the USS *Cole* attack, LTTE Sea Tigers using several suicide craft attacked the Sri Lankan Navy's *Uhana* cargo vessel carrying private cargo to Point Pedro from Trincomalee. The June 27 attack killed three sailors with five reported missing following the explosion. The LTTE established the Sea Tigers in 1984; they have since sunk 29 Sri Lankan naval gunboats and a freighter. The Sea Tigers include a division of frogmen

that have been deployed in attacks on the Sri Lankan naval base at Kankasanturai in the northern Jaffna peninsula. Other attacks have ranged as far afield as the Comoros.

Sri Lanka's Minister of Foreign Affairs recently suggested that the LTTE and al-Qaeda shared their techniques, commenting: "The precision targeting and execution of the attack on the hull of the vessel by al-Qaeda operatives was almost identical to the mode of attack conducted by the LTTE's Sea Tigers. One could discern from the similarity of attacks that there would have been a transfer of knowledge and expertise in the field of maritime terrorism."<sup>1</sup>

Maritime attacks have also spread to the insurgency in Iraq. On April 24, 2004, suicide bombers in three boats attacked Iraq's offshore Al Basrah (ABOT) and Khawr Al'Amaya (KAAOT) oil terminals in the Persian Gulf. The facilities, through which about 90% of Iraq's oil exports flow, are among the most heavily guarded in the world. Two U.S. Navy sailors and a Coast Guardsman were killed. Seven days later, MARLO issued an advisory announcing the establishment of an exclusion zone in Iraqi waters within 3,000 meters of the two terminals and the temporary suspension of the right of innocent passage in the surrounding waters, noting: "Vessels attempting to enter the zones without authorization may be subject to defensive measures, including, when necessary, the use of deadly force... The terrorists used ordinary dhows, fishing boats, and speedboats to conduct the attack in contravention of the law of armed conflict."<sup>2</sup> In June 2005 U.S. personnel handed over responsibility for the facilities' security to a contingent of Iraqi marines.<sup>3</sup>

Attacks on offshore oil installations have now spread to militant groups operating on Africa's western coast as well. On July 19 Nigerian Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) militants, who had previously limited their assaults to onshore Western oil facilities in the Niger Delta region, took their campaign offshore and attacked Royal Dutch Shell's Bonga platform and its attendant Floating, Production, Storage, and Offloading (FPSO) vessel 75 miles offshore in the Gulf of Guinea, firing automatic weapons from

1 Rohitha Bogollagama, "How Successful is Counter Terrorism in the Asia-Pacific? - Sri Lanka's Experience," IISS Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore, May 31, 2008.

2 MARLO Advisory, 06-04, May 1, 2004.

3 U.S. Department of Defense, www.defenselink.mil, June 16, 2005.

speedboats. The next day, Royal Dutch Shell shut down production until July 9 (see *Terrorism Monitor*, July 10).

### The Danger of Partnership between Pirates and Terrorists

While the last four years have seen no similar attacks, a parallel threat to maritime security has been on the rise – piracy. According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), there were 263 pirate attacks worldwide in 2007, up by 10 percent from the year before. Pirate assaults are becoming increasingly violent - guns were used in 72 of these attacks, up 35 per cent from 2006, and 64 crew members were assaulted and injured, compared with only 17 in 2006. The Straits of Malacca, the coasts of Nigeria and Somalia, and the Red Sea-Persian Gulf region are now the waters most dangerous for mariners. There are now approximately 3,600 tankers in service worldwide, of which about 435 are very large crude carriers (VLCCs), which can transport two million barrels. U.S. imports of crude oil and petroleum products average about 12 million barrels per day and account for 60 percent of America's oil supply.

The last several years have seen piracy increasingly shift its locus from southeastern Asian waters to the seas surrounding Africa, and the worry of many analysts is that opportunistic pirates, many of whom operate in Muslim-dominated nations, could make common cause with Islamic extremists. While this has yet to happen on any significant scale, the possibility exists, and the international maritime community is seeking interim solutions to the rising violence plaguing African waters.

Operations by Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150, a multinational coalition naval force headquartered at Djibouti since 2002) have helped quell terrorist activity in the Red and Arabian Seas. The CTF-150 flotilla patrols from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Oman and comprises 14-15 vessels.<sup>4</sup> A native Arab speaker accompanies CTF-150 boarding teams to talk with boat crews before intelligence is passed to the US Navy regional command center in Bahrain. On April 21 a CTF-150 warship assisted when heavily armed pirates attacked the 150,000-ton Japanese tanker *Takayama* in international waters 275 miles east of Aden and 90 miles off the southeastern Yemeni port of Mukalla, where six

years earlier al-Qaeda terrorists attacked the *Limburg* (*Asahi Shimbun*, April 22). None of the crew of 23 was injured in the attack. The German frigate *Emden* received the *Takayama's* "Tanker has been shot at and hit by armed boat" distress call and steamed to the scene, sending a helicopter ahead to reconnoiter, which caused the pirates to flee in their speedboat by the time the warship arrived.

### The Dangerous Waters of the Somali Coast

Somalia remains on the edge, as divisions between hardliners and moderates within the Islamist opposition Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) threaten the fragile agreement signed with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) two months ago. The African Union said that its newly extended AMISOM force was incapable of stabilizing the situation, as attacks on aid workers and lack of escorts for shipments further endanger humanitarian operations both on the ground and at sea (ICG CrisisWatch, August 1; Afrique en Ligne, July 1).

There are indications that poverty and unrealized nationalistic ambitions in Somalia are causing military personnel to participate in piratical activities. In Somalia's autonomous northeastern region of Puntland, the mayor of the coastal town of Eyl, Abdullahi Said O'Nur, told Radio Garowe that 400 soldiers with armored trucks had arrived there in response to Puntland President Adde Muse's statement that his administration is unable to pay civil servant and security forces' salaries. Accordingly, a number of soldiers have turned to crime and joined Somali pirates. In discussing the Somali pirates' demand of a \$1.1 million ransom following their May 25 seizure of the Dutch-owned *Amiya Scan*, O'Nur said, "I appeal to the ship's owners not to pay any ransom." (Radio Garowe, June 5).

In the chaos roiling Somalia, Mogadishu now hosts at least four distinct piratical groups, led by warlords, corrupt business people, and municipal authorities, all organized along clan backgrounds. (Garowe Online, July 5). Any international initiative to quell violence in Somali's waters is hamstrung by the fact that the country has no effective government.

### The Jihad at Sea

Whether motivated by ideology or simple greed, neither maritime terrorism nor piracy is likely to be solved soon. On April 26 a jihadist website posted its "Jihad Press

<sup>4</sup> The United States, Canada, France, Germany, Pakistan, and Great Britain are regular members of CTF-150, with occasional contributions from Spain, Denmark, Australia, Italy, Portugal, Turkey and the Netherlands. Command is held on a rotating basis.

Opinion: Maritime Terrorism Is Strategic Necessity,” which commented:

“The Crusader-Zionist campaign has nothing left besides roaming the sea. For more than a year, one after the other, armed battalions off the beaches of Yemen have started to hunt commercial [vessels], tourism [vessels], and oil tankers. In the current phase, it has become a necessity to the mujahideen in conducting a global campaign to restore the Islamic Caliphate and to rule the world through it. The next step is to control the sea and ports, starting with those surrounding the Arabian Peninsula... It becomes necessary to develop the battle to include the sea, and as the mujahideen have managed to form martyrs’ brigades on the ground, the sea remains the next strategic step toward ruling the world and restoring the Islamic Caliphate. The beaches of Yemen are considered the links between the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The latter overlooks the Strait of Bab al-Mandab in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. This region represents a strategic point to expel the enemy from the most important pillars of its battle. If it is unable to protect itself in this strategic region, then it cannot protect itself on the ground and its naval bases under the blows of the mujahideen” (hanein.info, April 30; see also *Terrorism Focus*, May 13).

Worldwide the number of piracy acts is increasing. In its most recent report on “Acts of Piracy and armed robbery against ships,” the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) Maritime Safety committee’s states: “The total number of acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships so far reported to the Organization is 4,566.”<sup>5</sup> Incidents occurred in Nigerian, Bangladeshi, Indian, Mozambiquan, Indonesian, Somali, Filipino, and Ecuadorian territorial waters, along with the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea. As current IMO regulations prohibit merchantmen from carrying any arms for self-defense, such attacks in the short term can only continue.

### Countering Maritime Terrorism

International efforts against such depredations continue: on July 30 French Defense Minister Hervé Morin and Spanish Defense Minister Carme Chacón stated their

countries’ interest in creating a multinational naval force to fight piracy off the coast of Somalia. Chacón commented, “Our wish is that as many countries as possible” participate, while Morin observed that Paris was “favorable to the Spanish initiative within the framework of an exercise that is at a minimum European, if not international” (AFP, July 30). The Franco-Spanish initiative began earlier this year, when on January 10 Spain and France agreed to create joint forces to fight terrorism during the 20<sup>th</sup> Spanish-French Summit, announcing their intention to assist in the creation of an agency to watch the maritime coasts of both the Maghreb and Western Africa.

Prodded by Washington, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed a resolution on June 2 allowing the U.S. and its coalition allies to intervene by “all necessary means” for the next six months to stop piracy off the Somali coast; coalition ships subsequently have since repelled pirates in at least two attacks in Somali waters.

Others are advocating sterner self-defense measures for merchantmen. Vladimir Korenkov, director of Russia’s Bazalt enterprise, whose products include RPG-18, RPG-22, RPG-26, and RPG-27 grenade launchers, proposes placing his company’s weaponry aboard merchantmen for self-defense ([www.bazalt.ru](http://www.bazalt.ru)). As the CIA numbers the world’s merchant fleets at more than 31,000, such a contract would certainly prove lucrative, even though such a measure would most likely simply increase violence in the open sea (CIA World Factbook, 2008).

In the meantime, the maritime carnage continues, whether motivated by ideology, poverty, or simple criminality. While jihadis seem to favor major attacks carried out by suicide craft laden with explosives, pirates as yet still prey on targets of opportunity, with arsenals ranging from machetes to automatic weapons. If the two disparate groups ever pool their resources, then maritime forces worldwide will have to expand their Combined Task Forces along with their definitions of terror. Individual ships make tempting targets - until the IMO revises its regulations on merchantmen carrying arms, lessons from history are in order. In WWI and WWII, when German submarines began to sink substantial numbers of Allied ships, navies were eventually forced to develop convoy tactics, allowing economy of force in warship deployment. The only certainty at present however, is that terrorist or piratical group will continue to prey on lone, unarmed merchantmen. If terrorist groups ever decide to “hire” local pirates, then the world’s navies may well see their mission shift from the more heroic

5 MSC.4/Circ. 1881, June 12, 2008, IMO; The report uses the definition of piracy given in Article 101 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

one of deploying missile-armed submarines and carrier task forces to the more mundane task of providing merchantmen escorts in unglamorous brownwater zones.

## Pakistan's Frontier Corps and the War against Terrorism – Part Two

By Tariq Mahmud Ashraf

Pakistan's paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC) was ushered onto the global stage by two tumultuous events: firstly, the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan and secondly, the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001.

The massive influx of over 3.5 million Afghan refugees in the wake of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan radically altered the demographics of Pakistan's tribal areas. Due to their cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and tribal affiliation with the inhabitants of the tribal areas, most of the Afghan refugees opted to seek refuge in Pakistan's borderlands. Since the number of refugees exceeded the native population of the tribal belt, they ended up constituting a majority of the population in areas such as Kurram Agency and the Chagai district of Balochistan.

### The Frontier Corps and the Afghan Mujahideen

Having to contend with the presence of the Soviets next door made the Pakistan military realize how inadequately they had equipped and trained the FC. This realization, along with the availability of a large number of Afghans in Pakistan tribal areas, made this area the hub of the military struggle against the Soviets. Enormous amounts of U.S. military aid and weapons flowed into the area with the Saudis bankrolling a virtual mushrooming of religious seminaries or "madrassas," which sprang up everywhere. This was to be the genesis of the Taliban phenomenon. Lacking any presence in the area, the Pakistan Army and the Inter-Services Intelligence service (ISI) co-opted elements of the FC to establish links with the mujahideen. Since most of the FC's manpower was drawn from local tribesmen having roots in the tribes inhabiting Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), this conduit worked well for the ISI in orchestrating the resistance against the Soviets. One negative result of the involvement of

the FC in training and equipping the mujahideen was that the FC troops established strong links with the militants that persist to this day. A significant number of the local tribal youth who subsequently enlisted for service with the FC have also had exposure to education in the religious seminaries, and these individuals tend to have a soft spot for the extremist militants that have made FATA their home for well over two decades. In January 2008 testimony to a U.S. House Foreign Affairs subcommittee, Christine C. Fair said that the Corps is "inadequately trained and equipped and has been ill-prepared for counter-insurgency operations in FATA." Fair also said that the Corps "was used to train the Taliban in the 1990s and many are suspected of having ties to that organization."<sup>1</sup>

Consequent to the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the emergence of the Taliban as the major force in that country, the FC quickly reverted back to its traditional roles of providing border security and carrying out anti-smuggling operations, but the ease with which the mujahideen had earlier crossed the Pakistan-Afghanistan border permitted them to continue travelling freely between the two countries. Surprisingly, given the involvement of the FC in the struggle to evict the Soviets from Afghanistan, the force continued to suffer from serious equipment and training deficiencies. To quite an extent, it is correct to state that the FC was not only poorly trained but also poorly equipped even in comparison with the Taliban.

### Impact of the American Invasion of Afghanistan

The second epochal event that served to bring the FC to prominence was the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan following the tragic events of September 11, 2001. The Coalition assault on the Taliban once again led to a mass exodus of refugees towards Pakistan from Afghanistan. This was also precipitated by the massive bombing in the area near Tora Bora and served to instill fear in the hearts of FATA tribesmen living in the area. Although support for the Pakistan Government's decision to aid the campaign against terrorism increased among the tribesmen, the porosity and inaccessibility of the border did allow sizeable al-Qaeda elements to flee from Afghanistan towards FATA. While some of these elements settled in the tribal areas, others managed

1 C. Christine Fair, "U.S.-Pakistan Relations: Assassination, Instability, and the Future of U.S. Policy," Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia on January 16, 2008. [http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2008/RAND\\_CT297.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2008/RAND_CT297.pdf).

to spread out into other parts of Pakistan, went underground, or both.

The period following the Coalition invasion saw several operations being conducted jointly by the Pakistan Army and Coalition troops. These operations can be divided into two broad phases from the Pakistani perspective. In the first phase, Pakistan was required to seal its borders against any attempts by al-Qaeda or Taliban remnants to cross over into FATA, while in the second phase, the requirement was to root out those undesirable elements who had either managed to cross over or those who were already ensconced within their shelters inside FATA.

Military operations in FATA commenced after it became known that some Taliban elements were planning to seek refuge in FATA and had been provided with logistical support by the Ahmedzai Wazirs living in South Waziristan Agency. These tribals were essentially motivated by greed, fear of al-Qaeda retribution, or misplaced sympathy with the cause of these militant elements. This operation was codenamed “Al-Meezan” and saw the FC once again being moved to forward positions along the Durand Line that separates Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Subsequently, when Coalition operations against the Tora Bora enclave commenced, it was felt that the paramilitary forces needed to be beefed up. This led to the regular Pakistan Army’s first ever entrance into the tribal areas. Needless to say, the lack of infrastructure in the region necessitated a resort to helicopters and even animal transport to reach some of the otherwise inaccessible areas. ‘Operation Al-Meezan’ entailed apprehending fleeing terrorists and reaching the suspected hideouts of undesirable elements in remote areas. Most importantly, all these operations had to be conducted in a manner that sought consensus with the natives and their pacification, while respecting their sensitivities – both religious and cultural.

For their part, the tribals pledged full support to the Pakistan Army, promised not to give refuge to any terrorist, and also agreed to participate alongside the Pakistan Army in anti-terrorist operations. In return for these pledges, the tribesmen stipulated three conditions from their side; 1) no foreigners would be permitted to enter the tribal areas; 2) no resort would be made to aerial bombing; and 3) the forces entering the tribal belt would not convert their stay into a permanent one. These initial operations met with significant success in that 203 al-Qaeda members were arrested while another

ten were killed. On the Pakistani side, the losses were seven killed and nine wounded – mostly FC personnel since the Pakistan Army was operating in the rear with the FC at the forefront.

#### Military Deployment in FATA

Although the military operations in FATA did not actually cease, the sudden mobilization of Indian forces along Pakistan’s eastern border in 2002 did serve to divert Pakistan’s attention from the north western borders (*Daily Times* [Lahore], February 9, 2006). This contingency necessitated some of the regular army elements in FATA being moved to the eastern border. This depletion in the presence of the regular army once again left the FC in charge of operations designed to seal the Pakistan – Afghanistan borders.

As soon as the situation on the eastern border eased, the troops were moved back into FATA and the adjoining areas from where they were in a position to launch Operation Al-Meezan-2 in conjunction with Operation Anaconda being mounted by Coalition forces across the border in Afghanistan. These joint operations were aimed at beefing up the military presence in the North and South Waziristan Agencies and necessitated the effective sealing of the border, for which an additional infantry brigade of the Pakistan Army had to be deployed and brought into action.

The growing need for military forces increased the total deployment of the Pakistan Army in the area to over two infantry divisions, comprising over 74,000 combatants distributed over 637 checkpoints throughout the tribal areas. From the Afghanistan side, 12,000 Coalition troops were involved in these operations, bringing the total number of deployed troops to over 86,000 personnel.

This operation led to spectacular successes but at enormous cost, since most of the targeted individuals were inside fortified shelters and had access to an enormous array of modern weapons. While 656 militants were arrested and 302 killed, the Pakistani forces lost 221 dead and 482 injured. In addition to the infantry of the Pakistan Army and the FC, army attack helicopters and fighter-bomber aircraft of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) were employed during this operation (*Nawa-e-Waqt* [Islamabad], September 22, 2003).



## From Police Force to Military Organization

As soon as the situation stabilized somewhat, the Pakistan Army once again took the back-seat with the FC assuming greater responsibility, but the training inadequacies, equipment deficiencies, and an endemic state of low motivation and morale led not only to large-scale desertions but also saw several fortified FC positions being easily overrun by the extremist militant elements. There were also instances where FC troops refused to take up arms against their own kith and kin inside FATA.

Incidents such as these have not only hurt the prestige and credibility of the FC as a military force, but have also led to allegations of FC troops being in collusion with extremist militants operating against Coalition troops inside Afghanistan. In the absence of a better alternative, however, the United States and Pakistan are now working on a major modernization program that would see the FC being elevated from the status of a mere police force to a military organization that is adequately trained and suitably equipped for the conduct of major counter-insurgency operations (*Dawn* [Karachi], December 6, 2006; *Los Angeles Times*, November 5, 2007). This development plan envisages the U.S. government funding the re-equipment of the FC and also providing military trainers. On the other hand, the Pakistan Government is considering a proposal to improve the terms and conditions of service of the FC personnel in order to bring these in line with those applying to personnel serving in the regular Pakistan Army. The future could possibly see the FC formations being made a formal part of the regular army just as the aftermath of the 1999 Kargil conflict over Kashmir witnessed the erstwhile Northern Light Infantry formations being converted into regular infantry battalions of the Pakistan Army (*Dawn*, June 13, 2000).

## The Future of the Frontier Corps

Notwithstanding the numerous failures that have characterized FC operations against the extremist militants in FATA, many experts continue to believe that the FC has a much better chance than the Pakistani army in securing the tribal areas. In his testimony to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, John D. Negroponte highlighted that the Government of Pakistan has launched a program to increase the size of the FC,

whose members have unique advantages operating in the tribal areas due to their linguistic and ethnic ties. The United States is supporting this expansion and is helping to train and equip the Frontier Corps to enhance Pakistan's ability to secure its border and provide security to the indigenous population.<sup>2</sup>

Recent reports indicate that Washington is planning a significant increase in current military assistance to the FC and its efforts to secure the tribal belt includes a proposal by U.S. Special Operations Command to train and arm tribal leaders to fight al-Qaeda and the Taliban with a \$750 million aid package for the border area over the next five years.<sup>3</sup> More importantly, the calls within Washington political circles for closer monitoring of how Pakistan utilizes U.S. aid could possibly lead to this aid reaching the FC rather than it being siphoned off for other purposes either by the Pakistan Government or the Pakistan Army.

## Conclusion

The FC has never been so much in the limelight throughout its century-long existence as it is today. Although some analysts view the U.S. plan to convert the FC into a potent counter-insurgency force with skepticism, the fact of the matter is that neither the U.S. nor Pakistan have any other option available than to rely on the FC. What is most important, however, is the fact that any plan to enhance the combat potential of the FC must not be undertaken in isolation from the imperative of socio-economic development of the deprived populace of FATA. While a potent military presence in the region might provide temporary relief, a long-term solution requires that the territories now constituting FATA be fully integrated with the rest of Pakistan rather than continuing to be governed by outdated laws and treated as a semi-autonomous region.

2 John D. Negroponte, "Securing The Dangerous Pakistan Tribal Areas," Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington DC, May 20, 2008

3 Jayshree Bajoria, "Pakistan's New Generation of Terrorists," Council on Foreign Relations, Washington DC, February 6, 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/15422/>.

## Sudan's Oil Industry Faces Major Security Challenges

By Andrew McGregor

Sudan's growing oil industry has already transformed the capital of Khartoum and has the potential to raise living standards throughout the country. The industry, dominated by Asian multinationals, nevertheless faces serious security threats from rebel movements unhappy with the conduct of foreign companies and the distribution of oil revenues.

Sudan has an estimated oil reserve of five billion barrels, making it an important player in an energy-hungry world. The reserves are part of the vast Central African Muglad Basin, which provides two main types of oil – Dar Blend Crude, which is typically sold at a discount due to its high acidity, and the higher quality heavy sweet Nile Blend Crude (APS Review Oil Market Trends, February 27, 2006). Sudan does not have the equipment, personnel, or experience to exploit its oil resource; foreign participation is thus essential. Oil production by Western oil companies was set to begin in the 1980s, but was halted because the outbreak of the Second Civil War made the work too dangerous. China, Malaysia, and India now control most of the Sudanese oil industry after filling the void in the 1990s.

Most of the oil is found in the South Sudan, with smaller oilfields in the western province of Kordofan. Exploration is ongoing in east Sudan and ready to begin in north Darfur. Khartoum's control of the South Sudan oilfields depends on the outcome of provisions of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M), the south's largest rebel movement. The two signatories form the Government of National Unity (GoNU), which rules the country until the status of the South is determined by referendum in 2011.

### The China Factor

Chinese involvement in Sudan's oil sector began in 1995 when President Omar al-Bashir invited China to develop Sudan's oil industry during a visit to Beijing (*China Daily*, November 3, 2006). China is now the world's second-largest oil importer, with Sudan ranking somewhere between its fourth and sixth largest source of oil, according to various estimates (Saudi Arabia, Iran, Angola, and Oman are other major suppliers).

Sudan currently pumps 500,000 bpd, with an estimated 200,000 bpd going to China, representing 6% of China's daily supply (Reuters, January 22). According to an official of the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China has invested over \$6 billion in the last decade in 14 oil projects (*Sudan Tribune*, November 5, 2007). In return, Beijing's political support for Sudan at the UN Security Council and elsewhere is generally unwavering.

China's quiet "arms for oil" exchange in the Sudan has angered rebel movements in Darfur, who have long accused Beijing of supplying the weapons used by Janjaweed militias and the regular Sudanese Army to slaughter civilians and destroy local infrastructure. It is estimated that as much as 90% of Sudan's small-arms imports come from China, with many of these weapons reaching Darfur despite an international embargo on all parties involved in the conflict (AP, August 5). China has also supplied Nanchang A-5 ground attack aircraft (NATO name: Fantan A-5) and training for the pilots. The fighters operate out of the Nyala airbase in Darfur (BBC TV, July 14).

### Darfur-Based Rebels Oppose China's Oil Companies

China's main opponent in Sudan is Darfur's Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), a skilled guerrilla force capable of mounting long-distance attacks under a leadership drawn mostly from the Zaghawa tribe, which straddles the border between Darfur and Chad.

Last October JEM seized GNPOC facilities at the Defra oil field in South Kordofan as a warning to China to cease its military and political support for Khartoum. Five oil workers were taken hostage with the warning, "Our main targets will be oilfields" (Reuters, October 25; October 29, 2007). A group of JEM rebels tried to seize Chinese facilities at al-Rahaw in South Kordofan in November 2007. JEM claimed to have taken the site but the SAF insisted they were driven off. "Our attack is another attempt at telling Chinese companies to leave the country... We are implementing our threat of attacks against foreign companies, particularly Chinese ones, and we will continue to attack... Our goal is for oil revenues to go back to the Sudanese people and that is a strategic plan of our movement," said JEM commander Abdul Aziz al-Nur Ashr, the brother-in-law of JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim (AFP, December 11, 2007). Ashr is currently standing trial on charges of terrorism and insurrection in Khartoum after being captured in JEM's May raid on Omdurman (see *Terrorism Monitor*, May 15).

In December JEM claimed to have seized part of the Hejlji oilfield after defeating SAF troops (Reuters, December 11, 2007). JEM official Eltahir Abdam Elfaki said the Arab Messiriya tribe had joined JEM in their attacks on Chinese oil operations after becoming angered when they were included in a disarmament campaign (Dow Jones, April 15).

The Sudan Liberation Army/Movement (SLA/M – not to be confused with the SPLA/M), a mostly Fur Darfur rebel group led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur, has also threatened Chinese oil facilities. In an interview al-Nur told Dow Jones, “Oil companies are gravely mistaken if they think security agreements with the sole government in Khartoum are enough to protect their operations” (Dow Jones, December 8, 2007). In April a JEM official announced JEM “would love” to have Western oil companies replace Chinese firms: “We don’t want China. We want to expel them. We have the means... We are preparing new attacks” (Dow Jones, April 15).

Darfur’s National Redemption Front (NRF) and the SLA/M attacked the Abu Jabra oil field in west Kordofan in November, 2006, causing significant damage to the facilities (*Sudan Tribune*, November 26, 2006; AP, November 27, 2006). The NRF, drawn mostly from the Zaghawa tribe, has close ties to Chad and normally operates in northern Darfur.

China has supplied a 315 man military engineering team to the United Nations Mission in Darfur peacekeeping force. Last November JEM commander Abdul Aziz al-Nur Ashr stated, “Our position is clear, the Chinese are not here for peace and they must leave immediately... Otherwise, we will consider the Chinese soldiers as part of the government forces and we will act accordingly... China is complicit in the genocide being carried out in Darfur and the Chinese are here to protect their oil interests in Kordofan” (AFP, November 25, 2007).

The discovery of oil in Darfur was first announced by the Sudanese Minister of Energy and Mining in April 2005. China is eager to begin serious exploration in Block 12-A, located in northern Darfur. Discussions on security have been undertaken with Khartoum, which is insisting the SAF first establish secure conditions on the ground before exploration begins. Once established, Chinese oil facilities in the region will be guarded by troops of the SAF (*Sudan Tribune*, July 9). Saudi and Yemeni companies are also interested in working in Darfur.

## Total SA’s Return to the South Sudan

Since Canadian Talisman Energy pulled out under domestic and international pressure in 2002, the oil industry in Sudan has been dominated by Chinese, Malaysian, and Indian interests. Now, however, French oil-giant Total SA is expected to begin drilling in South Sudan’s Block B in October after a 25 year absence (*Business Daily* [Nairobi], June 26). Total paid \$1.5 million per year to retain its license until operations could be resumed (Dow Jones, October 3, 2006). One of Total’s partners in the original 1980 consortium, Houston-based Marathon Oil, was forced to divest a 32.5% stake in the project earlier this year because of American sanctions. Total has already used its annual report to brace shareholders against a possible drop in share value if U.S. investment funds are forced to divest their Total holdings as a result of the sanctions. Total’s operations will be centered around Bor, capital of Jonglei Province, some 600 miles south of Khartoum. According to a Total official, “Our presence should clearly benefit the peoples of southern Sudan who have exited a long war, by helping with peace building, development, human rights, and democracy” (AFP, July 3).

## Crisis in Abyei

Much of Sudan’s oil industry is concentrated in the Abyei district, located in the volatile border region between North and South Sudan. Abyei is the traditional home of the Ngok Dinka, a Nilotic group closely related to the Dinka tribes that form the power base for the SPLA/M. It is also, however, a traditional grazing land for the semi-nomadic Messiriya tribe, Baggara (cattle-owning) Arabs who identify with their Arab kinsmen in North Sudan. Under the CPA, the Messiriya retain their grazing rights in Abyei until the region’s status is decided in 2011. In 1905 the Anglo-Egyptian government of Sudan incorporated the territory of nine Ngok Dinka chiefs into Kordofan province, regarded as part of the North Sudan. After independence in 1956, relations between the Ngok Dinka and the Messiriya deteriorated as the tribes lined up with the southern Anyanya rebels and the Khartoum government, respectively, during the 1956-1972 Civil War. When hostilities resumed in 1983, many Ngok Dinka joined the newly-formed SPLA/M, while the Messiriya were urged to join the Murahaleen, horse-borne Baggara militias given free rein to raid and loot Southern tribes in the borderlands between north and south Sudan. The Murahaleen became the model for the Janjaweed of Darfur.

Though the CPA established the Abyei Borders Commission as an independent agency responsible for setting the modern borders of Abyei district, their work has been rejected by Khartoum, which insists on maintaining the 1905 borders that would keep most of Abyei's oil production in northern hands. The CPA calls for a referendum in the district in 2011 that will determine whether the district joins the South Sudan (which will also vote on separation the same year) or remains an administrative district of the North.

Khartoum has been slow to remove its troops, arguing that they are needed to protect oil facilities. Fighting between the Messiriya and the SPLA has been common in the last two years. As insecurity increased the SAF returned to Abyei earlier this year, where they eventually clashed with the SPLA in intense fighting that flattened the town of Abyei in May and threatened to reopen the civil war. At least 30,000 people were displaced by the fighting. Eventually a June 8 "roadmap" was negotiated, calling for the creation of SAF/SPLA "joint integrated units" to restore order in the region (AFP, July 9). UN forces in the region provided transportation and ten days of training (*Sudan Tribune*, July 5). This did not prevent the SPLA from accusing the SAF of raiding a village six miles north of Abyei in July, a charge the SAF denied (Reuters, July 23).

The Messiriya have had their own disputes with the oil companies – on May 13 Messiriya tribesmen abducted four Indians working with Petro Energy Contracting Services in south Kordofan. Three escaped in June (though one went missing in the bush), while the fourth was released in late July (AFP, July 25).

United Nations forces are present in the region, tasked primarily with supporting the implementation of the CPA. Formed in 2005 with the agreement of the SPLA and NCP, the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) is a Chapter VII peacekeeping force mostly formed from Asian and African troops and is separate from UNAMID, the United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur. UNMIS is deployed in six regions: Bahr al-Ghazal (where Chinese peacekeepers are deployed), Equatoria, Upper White Nile, Nuba Mountains, Southern Blue Nile, and Abyei. UNMIS is not mandated to protect oil facilities.

UN civilian staff evacuated Abyei during the May fighting; several hundred mostly Zambian peacekeepers remained but did not intervene despite being authorized as a Chapter VII force to protect civilians (*Sudan*

*Tribune*, May 15). After coming under criticism, UNMIS explained that the movement of its Zambian troops had been restricted by the SAF (*The Monitor* [Kampala], June 16). These restrictions were removed after the June 8 "roadmap" agreement.

### Improving SPLA Military Capacity

In June the SPLA introduced a White Paper on Defense in the South Sudanese parliament in Juba despite opposition from the Ministry of National Defense in Khartoum, which claims it is a violation of the CPA (*Sudan Tribune*, June 27; *Al-Ahdath*, June 26). The White Paper calls for the creation of regular and reserve land forces, a small navy to patrol rivers, and a new South Sudan Air Force (SSAF). Although the SPLA is experiencing difficulties in paying its existing force, the document calls for the purchase of modern weapons and aircraft, obviously with an eye to use oil revenues to secure the South Sudan's energy resources.

DynCorp, a U.S.-based private security firm best known for a sex-trade scandal in Bosnia, was given a \$40 million contract by Washington in 2006 to provide training and telecommunications to the SPLA. According to a DynCorp official, "The US government has decided that a stable military force will create a stable country" (*Sudan Tribune*, August 12, 2006). DynCorp lost its contract after numerous irregularities and misconduct by two of its advisors in the field was revealed. The contract was turned over to United States Investigative Services (USIS), another private security firm with close ties to the U.S. administration.

### Conclusion

The conflict over Abyei is not a promising sign for peace in the region. If the North-South Civil War resumes, the oil industry will have little choice except to abandon their operations as they did in the 1980s. Khartoum is therefore desperate to find oil in the north (including Darfur) before the 2011 referendum. China is experiencing a moderate risk from JEM in its south Kordofan oil operations, but a move into Darfur will be highly risky, inviting attacks from JEM and other militant groups on their home ground. The Darfur rebels are also determined to claim their share of future oil revenues. The belief that all armed movements will eventually be given a share in these revenues as part of a negotiated settlement has led to increasing factionalization among the rebels, in turn increasing insecurity and decreasing the possibility of a negotiated peace.