The JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION

TerrorismMonitor

In-Depth Analysis of the War on Terror

VOLUME VI, ISSUE 6 • MARCH 24, 2008

IN THIS ISSUE:

The Haqqani Network and Cross-Border Terrorism in Afghanistan

By Imtiaz Ali

There has been an increase recently in alleged missile strikes inside Pakistani territory by U.S. forces operating across the border in Afghanistan. The attacks come at a time when there is a growing call in the United States for strikes on Pakistani territory to take out al-Qaeda safe havens believed to exist in the tribal agencies along the Afghan border. NATO military commanders in Kabul have time and again expressed their dissatisfaction with the performance of Pakistani security agencies in stopping the infiltration of armed Taliban groups like the "Haqqani Network" from Pakistan's tribal areas into Afghanistan. Despite the fact that U.S. authorities have consistently expressed their respect for Pakistan's sovereignty, they are simultaneously growing impatient with the growing strength of the militants on the Pakistani side of the border. According to U.S. officials, the cross-border activities of these militants have a direct impact on U.S. operations in Afghanistan.

Attack on Lwara Mundi

A March 12 missile attack targeted a home in the town of Lwara Mundi in North Waziristan, killing two women and two children. Pakistan quickly registered a protest with the Coalition forces in Afghanistan, deploring what an official called "the killing of innocent people." However, U.S.-led Coalition officials in Kabul said that the target of the precision-guided missile was a safe house of the Haqqani Network based in the border region of the North Waziristan agency (*Daily Nation* [Lahore], March 14). Just a day after Pakistan lodged

Jalaluddin Haqqani

The JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION

For comments or questions about our publications, please send an email to pubs@jamestown.org, or contact us at:

1111 16th St. NW, Suite #320
Washington, DC • 20036
Tel: (202) 483-8888
Fax: (202) 483-8337

its protest over the attack in Lwara Mundi, another missile attack on March 16 left as many as 20 killed, including a number of foreign fighters, when a house was targeted in Shahnawaz Kheil Doog village near Wana, the regional headquarters of South Waziristan. It is believed that the missiles were fired from two U.S. unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in the belief that the house was being used as a training camp for terrorists (*Daily Post* [Lahore], March 14). Though a U.S. Central Command spokesman would only say the missiles were not fired by any military aircraft—Predator UAVs are operated by the CIA—U.S. forces took responsibility for the earlier "precision-guided ammunition strike" on Lwara Mundi but made it clear that the target was the Haqqani Network (*Daily Mail* [Islamabad], March 14; AFP, March 13; Reuters, March 17). A spokesman for Coalition forces in Afghanistan said that Pakistan was informed after the attack, not before. The spokesman made it clear that U.S. forces will respond in the future as well if they identify a threat from across the border in Pakistan's tribal belt (*Daily Times* [Lahore], March 14). Though the Pakistani tribal region has been a center of concern since late 2001 when hundreds of al-Qaeda fighters took refuge there, the lawless belt between Pakistan and Afghanistan is now receiving attention for the growing activities of the Haqqani Network, a Taliban group which has been spearheading the insurgency against U.S.-led NATO forces in Afghanistan.

A Profile of the Haqqani Network

The "Haqqani Network" is a group of militants led by Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son, Sirajuddin Haqqani. Jalaluddin, who is said to be in his late 70s, is a noted Taliban commander with a bounty on his head and a place on the U.S. most-wanted list. Jalaluddin Haqqani is considered to be the closest aide of Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar and was a noted mujahideen commander in the 1980s resistance against the Russian occupation of Afghanistan. He rose to prominence after playing a leading role in the defeat of Muhammad Najibullah's communist forces in Khost in March 1991. After the Taliban's takeover of Kabul in 1995, the senior Haqqani joined the Taliban movement and rose to the top echelon of power in the regime. He remained a minister during the Taliban government and a top consultant to Mullah Omar. The senior Haqqani has rarely been seen in public since the collapse of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in late 2001, when he is believed to have crossed into Pakistan's Waziristan Tribal Agency to evade the advance of Coalition forces. There are continuous rumors that he is seriously ill or has even died. However, his son, Sirajuddin Haqqani, alias Khalifa, has not only filled the void created by the absence of his veteran jihadi father, but his well-organized group, known as the Haqqani Network, has emerged as the most dangerous and challenging foe for the Coalition forces in Afghanistan.

The Haqqani Network is based in the Dande Darpa Khel village near Miramshah, headquarters of the North Waziristan Tribal Agency. The town is about 10 miles from the Afghan border. Sirajuddin, believed to be in his early thirties, has a $200,000 bounty on his head. He belongs to the Zadran tribe of Afghanistan, which also has roots on the Pakistani side of the border. Residents in Dande Darpa Khel say that the junior Haqqani grew up in this small and remote town of North Waziristan, once the operational headquarters of his father's jihadist activities. It is said that he attended the now defunct religious seminary which his father founded in the early 1980s in the town of Bande Darpa Khel. Though he could not be considered a religious scholar, Sirajuddin certainly sharpened his jihad skills under the guidance of his father. Considered to be the leader of a new generation of Taliban militants on both sides of the border and a bridge between the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban, NATO officials have recently declared him as one of the most dangerous Taliban commanders in the ongoing insurgency in Afghanistan (*Los Angeles Times*, March 14). He is suspected as the mastermind behind the deadly attack on Kabul's only five-star hotel last January, which left eight people killed, including three foreigners (*Daily Times*, March 4). A U.S. military spokesman at Bagram Air Base described Sirajuddin's role in a series of devastating suicide bombings: "We believe him to be much more brutal and much more interested in attacking and killing civilians. He has no regard for human life, even those of his Afghan compatriots" (AP, February 21). The United States has offered a $200,000 bounty for Sirajuddin, who is expanding his operations from east Afghanistan into the central and southern regions.

Sirajuddin has evaded capture several times despite attempts by Pakistani security forces to arrest him at his house and seminary in Miramshah in North Waziristan. In 2005 Pakistani officials raided his headquarters in Dande Darpa Khel, the religious seminary and residential compound used by his network. The raiding party seized huge caches of weapons and ammunitions but Sirajuddin again escaped arrest (*Dawn* [Karachi], September 15, 2005).

Sirajuddin is also reported to have taken credit for a suicide-truck bombing in Khost on March 3 that killed two NATO soldiers and two Afghan civilians (Xinhua, March 13). The attack on a government building involved a truck loaded with explosives, drums of petrol, mines and gas cylinders. A Taliban videotape of the bombing was released on March 20, including a statement from the German-born suicide bomber, Cuneyt Ciftci—also known as Saad Abu Furkan—"The time has arrived to give sacrifices to Islam. Since we lack resources to fight the enemy, we will have to turn our bodies into bombs" (Newkerala.com, March 20).

On the Pakistani side of the border, Sirajuddin's influence has been growing as a "revered jihadist commander." He strongly opposed Maulvi Nazir's campaign against Uzbek and other foreign militants waged earlier this year by the militant tribal leader in South Waziristan (see *Terrorism Monitor*, January 11). He is reported to have played an important role in stopping the fighting between Maulvi Nazir's tribal militia and Uzbek militants in Wana and the surrounding area in March last year. Sirajuddin took part in a tribal jirga, attempting to sort out differences between combatant foreigners and local militants, but the talks collapsed when Maulvi Nazir asked for the surrender of all foreign militants residing in the region bordering Afghanistan (*Dawn*, March 24, 2007). In late January, two arrested members of the Haqqani Network revealed that up to 200 suicide bombers had infiltrated into Pakistan's cities in preparation for the current wave of bombings (*Khabrain* [Lahore], January 28).

Two months ago, one of Sirajuddin's most important commanders, Darim Sedgai, was reported killed after being ambushed by unknown gunmen in Pakistan, though spokesmen for the Haqqani Network claim that Sedgai is recovering from his wounds (*The News* [Karachi], January 28). Coalition forces in Kabul confirmed the killing of Sedgai, who was known as a powerful commander of the Haqqani Network, overseeing the manufacture and smuggling of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) into Afghanistan. These activities led U.S. forces to post a $50,000 reward for information leading to his death or arrest. A native of the North Waziristan agency, Sedgai was a follower of Jalaluddin Haqqani and fought under his command with the mujahideen in Afghanistan. Until his reported death in January, Sedgai was an important leader of the Haqqani Network and was considered to be a close friend of Sirajuddin Haqqani (Pajhwok Afghan News, January 28).

Conclusion

Afghan officials as well as Coalition forces in Kabul have cited Sirajuddin's use of North Waziristan as operational headquarter for his alleged cross-border terrorist activities as one example of Pakistan's inability to eliminate terrorist sanctuaries in its tribal areas. Though the Pakistan government regards these claims as baseless, it is known that two years ago Sirajuddin issued a circular urging militants to continue their "jihad" against the United States and the Karzai government "till the last drop of blood." But in the same statement he pointed out that "fighting Pakistan does not conform to Taliban policy… those who [continue to wage] an undeclared war against Pakistan are neither our friends nor shall we allow them in our ranks" (*Dawn*, June 23, 2006). There are signs that this is no longer the policy of the Haqqani faction of the Taliban.

As the Haqqani Network has risen to the first rank of the Taliban insurgency it can be expected that U.S.-led Coalition forces in Afghanistan will continue to target Sirajuddin Haqqani and the rest of the network leadership. With such strikes now occurring on Pakistani soil the Haqqanis are emerging as a serious domestic problem for Islamabad. How it chooses to deal with the Haqqani Network threat will provide a test case for Pakistan's role in the ongoing war on terror.

Imtiaz Ali is a Pakistan-based journalist working as a special correspondent for the Washington Post.

India's Intelligence Services Struggle with War on Terrorism

By Wilson John

A diffuse but highly networked group of terrorists, driven by a dangerous cocktail of extremist ideology and a simmering sense of anguish and revenge, currently pose a serious threat to India's economic and social structure. The militants exploit gaping holes in India's counter-terrorism architecture and strategy as well as the nation's ambivalent policies toward religious minorities, particularly the 150-million strong but largely impoverished Muslim community.

What has complicated the Indian intelligence agencies' task since the flowering of al-Qaeda and a global jihadist movement after 9/11 is the alacrity with which

various terrorist groups and their support structures have reworked their strategy and operational methods to effectively dodge a series of worldwide bans. The most dramatic change in the Indian context has been the realignment of terrorist forces, with prominent groups like the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM)—proscribed by the United States and other countries, including Pakistan—stepping back to allow Harkat-ul Jihad al-Islami (HuJI), an al-Qaeda ally with a pan-South Asian presence, to lead the terror campaign in India (Rediff.com, May 25, 2007).

Other changes have been noticed in the structure and modus operandi of India's terrorist groups. The new recruits to the cause are local men: young, educated and without previous involvement in extremist activities. These men form the nucleus of groups throughout India who tap into the local criminal-*hawala* network of couriers and handlers to move money and explosives—often locally acquired—to carry out terrorist strikes [1]. The group carrying out the operation typically disengages and disappears after striking, leaving hardly any trace of its existence. Since the simultaneous explosions in Delhi in 2005, investigating agencies frequently encounter red herrings left by the terrorists to confuse the investigation and allow greater time to disband and escape.

Changing Circumstances

Two critical aspects in the growth of Indian terrorism are the mounting evidence pointing to the involvement of the HuJI in terror attacks and the alliance of this group with the Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), a banned network of young Muslim activists who openly claim Osama bin Laden as their idol (*The Hindu*, April 3, 2007). For a long time India's federal and state investigating agencies did not see the link as a serious development, continuing instead to rely on past experience by focusing on LeT and JeM activists.

One of the primary reasons for this poor assessment was the inability of the intelligence agencies and the whole cornucopia of coordinating agencies at state and federal levels to think beyond the entrenched "conventional wisdom" of analyzing terrorist groups through ideological prisms, thereby completely missing the possibility that these groups might work together for a common goal. This has happened not only in India but even in Pakistan, where one such coalition of terror groups called Brigade 313 was involved in assassination attempts on President Pervez Musharraf (*Newsline*, August 2004; *Asia Times*, July 14, 2004).

Equally restricting has been the reluctance, and even refusal, to share information among the intelligence and security agencies. Along with an inept information-sharing architecture at the national level, this reluctance has proved to be the most critical flaw in counter-terrorism intelligence operations (*The Hindu*, October 30, 2001). The problem came to the fore recently when police in the Karnataka state of southern India arrested one Riyazuddin Nasir on charges of vehicle theft. Nasir would have been let out on bail for these minor charges but for a single intelligence official in Delhi who decided to search the database for connections with terrorist activities. Nasir was found to be a HuJI operative and one of India's most wanted men (*The Hindu*, February 12).

Failure to Cooperate

It is not really difficult to see where the problem is—an intelligence structure which has yet to emerge from its debilitating colonial legacy and a complementary stranglehold of bureaucracy. The structure and operational philosophy of state police and intelligence units have not changed much since British days—they are mostly structured as agencies to protect law and order and spy on rivals rather than act as investigative and intelligence units. Criminal investigators are usually inserted into terrorism investigations only after an incident takes place. There are no independent anti-terror units carrying out both intelligence and investigations into terrorist groups at the state level.

At the top of the intelligence pyramid is the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), headed by an all-powerful, politically-appointed National Security Advisor (NSA), who often has much more than terrorism on his mind. Intelligence operations within the country are carried out by the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and its wide network of officers and men, all reporting to the Ministry of Home Affairs. The ministry is headed by a cabinet minister and one or two ministers of state—besides a secretary and other senior officials—who often get tempted, at least close to the elections, to utilize the IB for assessing the electoral chances of their party while spying on their rivals. EM Rammohan, a former member of the National Security Advisory Board, notes: "Instead of concentrating on security issues, they are busy chasing the Opposition so that the ruling party is kept in power. Is that the job of the IB?" (outlookindia.com, July 31, 2006).

External intelligence is the responsibility of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), working directly under the Cabinet Secretary but reporting to the NSA for all practical purposes. RAW keeps a sharp eye on the activities of terrorist groups with bases in foreign countries. According to former IB joint-director Maloy Krishna Dhar, RAW's reluctance to share information with IB is legendary (Rediff.com, August 17, 2006). There have also been instances where personality clashes have deterred effective coordination between the NSA and RAW chiefs [2].

The second set of intelligence agencies are the military ones, led by the Directorate General of Military Intelligence (DGMI) with a network of field offices and forward posts in the border areas as well as representatives in diplomatic missions. Since the DGMI has been historically part of the Army, the Air Force and Navy have individual intelligence units collecting and collating information relevant to their operations and bases. The Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), created in 2002 to correct this anomaly, is entrusted with the task of coordinating the whole spectrum of military intelligence but is presently short-staffed, poorly funded and burdened with an ambitious and expanding circle of objectives [3].

Paramilitary organizations like the Central Reserve Police Force and Border Security Force maintain their own intelligence units to support counter-insurgency operations in Kashmir and elsewhere. Their intelligence operations have often been stymied by the Army's reluctance to share intelligence tapped from its wide network of informers and sources. Other government agencies providing physical security, like the Special Protection Group, Central Industrial Security Force and National Security Guards, all maintain their own intelligence units.

At the bottom of the pyramid are the state police, whose intelligence networks remain the primary source of information and main agency for implementing action on the ground. The most critical element in this structure is the investigative branch of the local police forces. These go by various names, such as the Criminal Investigation Department, the Special Branch or the Crime Branch. There is no uniformity in responsibilities or operational duties. Typically these units carry out the investigation and prosecution of terrorist, *hawala*, arms and counterfeit cases, placing them in the unique position of being able to detect the emergence of terror networks or coalitions.

Unfortunately they remain the weakest link in the intelligence chain as these units carry the burden of acting as colonial-style law enforcement agencies and not as modern units capable of organizing preventive measures based on intelligence collection. These forces are commonly afflicted with poor morale and problems related to accountability, pay and training. Even in metropolitan centers like Delhi and Mumbai, the police-criminal nexus and pervasive corruption have rendered effective intelligence from federal agencies worthless. There was clear intelligence available about terrorist attacks in Mumbai at least a month before the July 2006 commuter train blasts. This intelligence was not followed up on, nor were preventive measures put in place at railway stations. A week after the Mumbai blasts, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was quoted by the media as saying that "past responses have been inadequate in dealing with these problems which are of a different intensity, magnitude, scale and scope" (*The Tribune* [Chandigarh, Punjab], July 21, 2006).

Reforming the Intelligence Structure

Of the several steps taken in recent years to overcome these outstanding difficulties, two held great promise. One was the creation of the National Technical Research Organization (NTRO), with a focus on collecting technical intelligence (TECHINT), cyber intelligence and cyber counter-intelligence [4]. Beginning with RAW's Aviation Research Centre (ARC) assets, NTRO is rapidly expanding and strengthening its intelligence capabilities to fulfill this mandate. On the other hand, the NTRO mandate adds one more agency to the mix, as the IB, RAW and the Army's Signals Directorate will continue to maintain autonomous TECHINT units.

The second step was the establishment of a Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) and a Joint Task Force on Intelligence within IB as a hub of India's counter-terrorism effort. The mission objective was to run an umbrella organization comprising state-level units called SMACs and the development of a national counter-terrorism database supported by state-level police-intelligence Joint Task Forces and inter-state Intelligence Support Teams (*The Hindu*, February 12). Conceived after the pattern of the CIA's Counter-Terrorism Center, the MAC was to be responsible for the joint analysis of intelligence flowing from different quarters and coordinating relevant follow-up actions (Rediff.com, April 6, 2003).

Five years after MAC was approved, it is today composed of a skeletal staff and five SMACs, using a database

hosted on a bare-bones computer system designed in-house, with no real-time links to state police forces or other intelligence agencies. There is no sign of the development of the comprehensive database on terrorists on which the entire counter-terrorism information grid was to be built. Senior intelligence officials have pointed out that the interrogation reports of 16,000 Islamist terrorists caught between 1991 and 2005 could prove to be a goldmine of actionable intelligence (*The Hindu*, February 6). These inadequacies can be overcome by beefing up the present staff strength and widening the recruitment base to include the qualified technical personnel needed to develop, integrate and man the information grid. But progress is delayed due to unseemly bureaucratic wrangling over funding for an additional 140 positions at MAC. Added to this problem is the Indian Army's refusal to depute officials to the agency, citing disciplinary and administrative problems (*The Hindu*, February 12).

Conclusion

Difficulties like these and the tepid response of the state governments to a 2007 Supreme Court directive ordering improvements in the functioning of police and intelligence agencies continue to bedevil India's attempts to fashion an effective counter-terrorism strategy. Meanwhile terrorist groups continue to display a marked advantage in adapting to newer technologies and modes of operation, allowing them to function more quickly and quietly than the Indian intelligence community.

Wilson John is a Senior Fellow with Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, India.

Notes

1. *Hawala* is an alternative remittance system with both legitimate and illegitimate uses.

2. Author's interview with a senior RAW official.

3. Author's interview with an official from the Defence Intelligence Agency, New Delhi, in 2007.

4. From B. Raman's lecture on National Security and Armed Forces Command Structure, organized by the Forum for Strategic and Security Studies, New Delhi, on October 16, 2007. Raman is a former senior RAW official who gives details of various intelligence operations in his recent book, *Kaoboys of RAW*, New Delhi, 2007.

Britain's Prison Dilemma: Issues and Concerns in Islamic Radicalization

By Raffaello Pantucci

The increasingly rapid tempo of arrests and convictions of terrorist plotters by the British security services has had the concurrent effect of increasing the number of terrorist prisoners now incarcerated in the United Kingdom's penal system. This influx of hardened terrorists into the system has started to alarm many in the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office who are concerned about the "disruptive impact of terrorists on prison regimes" (*Guardian*, March 3). Fears are focused on two main concerns: clashes between groups of Muslim prisoners and others in the general prison population, and the potential for high-profile terrorist prisoners to radicalize susceptible imprisoned youths.

The Shoe Bomber and the Amir

These fears are not without some basis. It has been widely reported that "shoe bomber" Richard Reid was radicalized while serving a sentence for petty crime in Feltham Young Offenders Institution. The "amir" of the July 21 group—responsible for the attempted bombings of the London underground on July 21, 2005—Muktar Said Ibrahim, was similarly radicalized during a period of incarceration at either Huntercombe or Feltham Young Offenders Institution (BBC, July 29, 2005; *Observer*, July 15, 2007). Imams preaching extremism have been blamed for radicalizing impressionable young men—in 2002, imams at both Huntercombe and Feltham were suspended for such activities (*Observer*, July 15, 2007).

British authorities are also concerned by behavior seen in prisons across the Channel in continental Europe. The recent conviction in Spain of 20 individuals for "Islamic terrorist activity"—though not on the original charge of plotting to drive a truck bomb into the main anti-terrorist courthouse—spawned from a plot that was led by Abderrahmane Tahiri, also known as Mohamed Achraf, and was concocted behind bars (Reuters Espana, February 27). Similarly, in 2005, French police arrested Safe Bourada, an Algerian who had served time in prison for plotting the 1990s metro attacks in Paris. Bourada was charged with leading a terror cell he had recruited while serving his sentence

(*Times*, October 3, 2006; *Le Monde*, September 27, 2005).

Fears in the United Kingdom, however, date back to the Irish troubles, when many remember the role played by detainees in HM Prison Maze during the 1970s-1990s (BBC, October 23, 2007). Initially intended as a place of incarceration, the penitentiary slowly developed into a political rallying point, even going so far as to attract a visit by Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Mo Mowlam as a part of the peace talks. Furthermore, violence between different dissident groups often spilled over beyond the prison walls, with some 29 prison officers killed during the troubles (*Observer*, July 15, 2007).

Her Majesty's Prison Belmarsh

In particular, there are concerns about the prison population in HM Prison Belmarsh in Southeast London, where at least 151 of 916 prisoners attend Muslim religious services regularly [1]. One police official described the prison to Jamestown as Britain's own "madrasah," and there have been reports of guard intimidation: "When an officer confronts a Muslim prisoner…he or she finds themselves surrounded by five or six other inmates" (*Observer*, July 15, 2007). Even more alarming, in July 2007, prison officers confiscated a laptop computer from prisoner Tariq al-Dour, who was convicted alongside Younis Tsouli, also known as Irhabi 007 (see *Terrorism Focus*, March 4), for allegedly using a mobile phone to connect to the internet and building a terrorist-sympathetic website (*Mirror*, July 15, 2007). The scuffle surrounding the seizure of the computer led to a riot between prison officers and al-Qaeda sympathizers detained in the prison (*Observer*, July 15, 2007).

There are currently around 130 prisoners convicted or on remand for terrorist-related crimes in the British penal system, though this number is likely to increase as a number of high-profile cases reach conclusion (*Guardian*, March 3). This is in a prison population of around 80,000, about 11 percent of which identify themselves as Muslims (BBC, August 3, 2007). Given that not all of these prisoners are held apart from the general population, the result is that convicted terrorists can be incarcerated with criminals detained for more petty crimes, a potentially dangerous combination. As Steve Gough, vice-chairman of the Prison Officers Association, put it: "The majority of the prison population is comprised of angry young men, disenfranchised from society. It doesn't matter if they are English, Afro-Caribbean, or whatever. These people are ripe for radicalization" (*Observer*, July 15, 2007).

Stories of radicals openly leading Muslim services have emerged. In 2006, the BBC learned that Khalid al Fawwaz, also known as Abu Omar, who is currently fighting extradition to the United States for charges pertaining to the 1998 embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, led prayers amongst Muslim prisoners while being detained in 2003 at HM Prison Woodhill (BBC, May 4, 2006). In August 2007, the Prison Officers Association expressed concern that Abu Qatada, a Jordanian-Palestinian wanted on terrorism charges in eight countries, might have been preaching in HM Prison Long Lartin—officers were unable to understand exactly what Qatada was doing during "thrice daily communal prayers" (BBC, August 3, 2007). Reflecting prison officers' heightened awareness of this problem, Dhiren Barot, also known as Essa al-Hindi—mastermind of a series of plots including against potentially high-profile financial targets in the United Kingdom and United States—has complained that "any time the prison [official] [sic.] feels that I may have found a 'friend' that I may be 'overly' socializing with, more often than not the individual/s concerned are promptly shipped out to other establishments. Why? For irrational fear of 'sermonizing' or 'talent scouting' of course because they believe I have an arresting personality! The same goes for physical training with other inmates" [2].

The Dispersal Strategy

One solution that has been attempted is dispersal, whereby prisoners detained on al-Qaeda-related charges are sent to prisons around the country to avoid their clustering and forming gangs in specific prisons. A particularly high-profile instance of this has been the decision to transfer prisoners Omar Khyam, the leader of a group of would-be terrorist bombers broken up by 2004's "Operation Crevice," Hussein Osman, one of the July 21 plotters and Dhiren Barot to HM Prison Frankland in Durham, England.

Clashes between the extremists and other prisoners in HM Prison Frankland have been frequent. In July 2007, Barot was assaulted by other prisoners with scalding water and boiling oil, leading to substantial burns and scarring (*Observer*, February 10; al-istiqamah.com, November-December 2007). Then in October 2007, Omar Khyam, who according to his lawyer has faced

death threats from other inmates [3], assaulted another prisoner in a similar manner resulting in charges being brought against him (BBC, January 31).

Many prisoners charged with terrorist offenses have been spread over a number of prisons nationally, but concerns remain surrounding the possibility of deeper long-term radicalization or clashes between gangs of extremists and other prisoners. As the national commissioning plan for security prisons highlighted: "There is an urgent need to understand the custodial behavior of this group of offenders and its potential impact on other prisoners" (*Guardian*, March 3).

Government Response

In a speech at King's College on January 17, Home Secretary Jacqui Smith announced that "with the Ministry of Justice and the Prisons Service we have set up an important program to understand and address radicalization in our prisons system" [4]. This announcement is something that the Prison Officers Association and others have long been calling for. Its delay was the product of a recent shake-up in the Home Office of the United Kingdom. Sparked by an immigration scandal, then-Home Secretary John Reid announced in the ensuing process that responsibility across the government for counter-terrorism would be moved to an Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism within the Home Office. Responsibility for prisons, formerly a Home Office role, would now be handed off onto the newly formed Ministry of Justice (BBC, March 29, 2007).

The Home Office has also introduced a four-strand counter-terrorism strategy known as "Contest," involving phases known as "Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare." It was determined, however, that the "Prevent" aspect—which deals with "tackling the radicalization of individuals"—of the government's strategy would be led by the Department of Communities and Local Government. One can see how radicalization in prisons falls tidily between the cracks in these newly defined bureaucratic lines.

Conclusion

The potential risks from Britain's prisons would seem to be real, though not completely understood. While more rigid vetting has hopefully prevented extremist imams from preaching to susceptible and captive populations of incarcerated young men, the system is not foolproof. The bigger problems remain of how to handle a growing long-term prison population of hardened terrorists from proselytizing to fellow prisoners and how to prevent a repetition of some of the problems faced during the Irish troubles. When one considers that Britain's internal security service MI5 claims to have at least 2,000 terrorist plotters under surveillance, with possibly "double that number" that they do not know about [5], it seems inevitable that the problem of prison radicalization will be further magnified.

Raffaello Pantucci is a Research Associate at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London.

Notes

1. HM Prison Belmarsh, Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board, July 2006-June 2007.

2. "Eesa Barot's Letter to the Ummah," al-istiqamah.com.

3. "Abuse of Muslims in Frankland Prison," Help the Prisoners campaign pack, December 27, 2007; helptheprisoners.org.uk.

4. Home Secretary Jacqui Smith, "Our Shared Values – A Shared Responsibility," First International Conference on Radicalisation and Political Violence, January 17, 2007; security.homeoffice.gov.uk.

5. Jonathan Evans, "Address to the Society of Editors by the Director General of the Security Service," November 5, 2007; mi5.gov.uk.

Unwelcome Guests: The Turkish Military Bases in Northern Iraq

By Gareth Jenkins

Following the Turkish military's raid on northern Iraq in late February, the little-known and poorly understood presence of Turkish military bases in Kurdish Iraq has become a major issue in relations between the two countries. On February 26, the parliament of the Kurdistan region of Iraq approved a motion calling on the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to demand the closure of all Turkish military bases in northern Iraq (*Today's Zaman*, February 27). The decision came

during the incursion into northern Iraq by Turkish troops against elements of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and demonstrated not only the KRG's often ambivalent attitude toward the presence of the PKK on the territory under its nominal control, but also the suspicions of many Iraqi Kurds that Turkey is using its war against the PKK as a pretext to stifle their own dreams of independence.

Turkey's long-term military presence in northern Iraq has generated surprisingly little international attention. In the months leading up to the Turkish incursion in February, there was considerable debate about the impact that Turkish ground troops crossing the border might have on what has long been the most stable region of Iraq and almost none on the several thousand Turkish ground troops who have been deployed in northern Iraq for over a decade.

Why Are Turkish Bases in Northern Iraq?

The PKK has been operating out of northern Iraq since it launched its insurgency in 1984. Initially, northern Iraq was primarily a forward staging area. Until 1998, the PKK's high command and main training camps were located in Syria and the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. However, the mountains that straddle the Iraqi-Kurdish border were much more suitable as a platform for infiltrations into Turkey than the relatively flat and heavily mined terrain along Turkey's border with Syria. The PKK also benefited from the defeat of Saddam Hussein in the 1991 Gulf War and the creation by the U.S.-led Alliance of a no-fly zone above the 36th parallel. Although the Allies' intention was to create a safe haven for the Iraqi Kurds, the resultant power vacuum in northern Iraq also indirectly provided the PKK with immunity from the regime in Baghdad. At the time, the Iraqi Kurds themselves were divided between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), led by current KRG President Massoud Barzani, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), headed by current Iraqi President Jalal Talabani. Neither leader had the ability to suppress the PKK. Indeed, each appeared more interested in using what military capabilities they did possess to pursue their long-running and frequently violent rivalry.

After the 1991 Gulf War, Turkey increasingly took matters into its own hands. It already had an agreement with the regime in Baghdad for cross-border hot pursuits of PKK militants. Starting in 1992, the Turkish military began to launch a series of large-scale incursions—sometimes with tens of thousands of troops—into northern Iraq to strike at PKK camps and bases there. It even established an informal alliance with Barzani, under which the KDP peshmerga militia served as guides for Turkish units in operations against the PKK, at times even fighting alongside Turkish troops. In return, Turkey gave the KDP the arms and supplies it captured in raids on the PKK's camps and bases in northern Iraq.

Although most of the Turkish troops were withdrawn once the incursions had achieved their operational objectives, in practice Turkey retained a small, permanent, military presence in northern Iraq, consisting of intelligence officers and personnel responsible for liaison with the KDP. The situation was formalized when the United States finally succeeded in brokering an agreement between the KDP and the PUK. From 1997 onward, Turkish troops were formally deployed to northern Iraq as part of a ceasefire monitoring mechanism, whose mandate came up for renewal on an annual basis. Turkish regular forces were deployed in the northwest of the Kurdistan Region, in territory under the KDP's control, while Turkish Special Forces established offices further south in the cities of Arbil and Sulaymaniyah (AFP, October 16, 2007).

Monitoring the PKK

Publicly, Turkish officials insist that the troops were invited into northern Iraq by the Kurds to contribute to regional peace and stability. Privately, they admit that their main motivation was to establish a formal presence in northern Iraq to monitor PKK activity in the region. Today at least, the Iraqi Kurds tend to regard the agreement as something that was imposed upon them and which, after more than a decade without serious clashes between the KDP and PUK, is simply no longer needed.

Initially, the Turkish deployment consisted of a brigade of around 5,000 men, mostly Special Forces and commandos backed by armor and artillery. In August 1999, following the capture and imprisonment of its founder Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK announced that it was abandoning the armed struggle. In the following years, the number of Turkish troops deployed in northern Iraq was gradually reduced and does not appear to have been substantially increased since the PKK returned to violence in June 2004.

No official figures are available but there are currently estimated to be around 2,000 Turkish troops still deployed in northern Iraq under the 1997 agreement.

They are concentrated in a strip of land approximately 10 miles deep along the Turkish border in Dohuk province in the northwest of Iraqi Kurdistan. Most are located in a Turkish base at the former Iraqi military airfield at Bamerni, approximately 15 miles (24 kilometers) south of the Turkish-Iraqi border. There are smaller bases both to the west of Bamerni, close to the town of Batufa, and to the east in the al-Amadiyah district, close to the town of Qanimasi and on a hill which has been named Dilmen Tepe by the Turkish army. In addition to commandos, Special Forces and support units, the deployment in northern Iraq also includes a tank battalion, most of which is based at Bamerni. The troops are usually supplied by land from Turkey. Although it is not used for fixed wing aircraft, helicopters—including both transport helicopters and Cobra attack helicopters—fly in and out of Bamerni. In 2006, in an indication that it had no immediate intention of leaving Iraq, the Turkish military upgraded its facilities at Bamerni, including increasing its helicopter-handling capabilities.

The importance of the deployment in northern Iraq to Turkey's war against the PKK is disputed. There is little doubt that the Turkish bases are useful as platforms for intelligence gathering and covert operations against the PKK in the surrounding countryside. However, under the terms of the agreement, the Turkish troops are deployed in a monitoring capacity only and are not supposed to leave their bases unless they have the agreement of the Iraqi Kurdish authorities. As a result, the Turkish troops deployed under the agreement have not been used to engage the PKK militarily in northern Iraq.

Effectiveness against PKK Infiltration

The number of PKK militants in the Kurdistan Region varies, falling in the summer and rising in the winter when the snow blocks the mountain passes on its infiltration routes and most of the organization's fighting units withdraw from Turkey to wait out the winter in northern Iraq. There are currently estimated to be around 3,500 PKK militants in northern Iraq with perhaps another 1,000 in winter hideouts inside Turkey. However, the PKK's main infiltration routes and most of its militants in Iraq are located to the east of the Turkish bases and separated from them by high mountains. Some routes are close to the border, such as in the Zap region, which was the target of the February incursion (see *Terrorism Monitor*, March 7), while others are closer to the organization's headquarters and main training camps deep in the Qandil mountains, close to Iraq's border with Iran and around 60 miles (100 kilometers) south of its border with Turkey.

The Turkish military presence in northern Iraq is resented by both the local populace and the Iraqi Kurdish authorities. Although it has repeatedly presented its war against the PKK as a struggle against terrorism, Turkey has traditionally been at least as concerned by the PKK's ultimate goal, namely Kurdish separatism, as by the methods used to try to achieve it. It has long feared that the development of a Kurdish political entity could eventually culminate in full independence, which in turn could further fuel separatist sentiments amongst Turkey's own Kurdish minority. Ankara has always insisted that it will never allow the Iraqi Kurds to establish an independent state. Many Iraqi Kurds suspect—probably with a degree of justification—that the main reason for Turkey retaining its bases in northern Iraq is to serve as a physical reminder of its military might and political determination.

Opposition of the Kurdistan Regional Government

The KRG has always insisted—probably with more bravado than conviction—that it will resist militarily any Turkish attempt to interfere in Iraqi Kurdistan's internal affairs. Since 2004 peshmerga bases have been built next to the Turkish ones. On February 21, the first day of Turkey's eight-day incursion, approximately 350 Turkish troops in armored vehicles and around 12 tanks tried to leave the Turkish base at Bamerni. The KRG had received no prior notification of the deployment. Peshmerga surrounded the base and refused to allow the Turkish forces to leave. After a confrontation lasting 90 minutes, the Turkish forces backed down and withdrew inside the base (*Radikal*, March 4). In retrospect, the attempted deployment appears to have been a diversionary tactic, designed to distract the PKK from the coming attack on the Zap region. Nevertheless, the 90-minute standoff at Bamerni underlined the potential for a much more serious confrontation.

In practice, there appears little the KRG can do to force Turkey to close down its bases in northern Iraq. The Turkish General Staff bluntly dismissed the resolution calling for the bases' closure and vowed that it would remain in northern Iraq until the PKK had been eradicated (*Vatan*; NTV, March 5). In reality, the KRG appears to lack both the military muscle and the political authority to force the issue, not least because it is the central government in Baghdad, rather than the KRG, which is responsible for handling Iraq's relations with other states. The central government is unlikely to want

to risk a confrontation with Turkey by insisting that it close its bases.

On the other hand, neither the KRG nor the central government in Baghdad is likely to welcome a plan touted in the Turkish media following the completion of the Turkish military incursion into northern Iraq in February. According to a report in *Today's Zaman*, the Turkish General Staff is contemplating the establishment of an additional 11 military bases on the Iraqi side of the Turkish-Iraqi border in order to block the PKK's main infiltration routes into Turkey (*Today's Zaman*, February 29). However, the sourcing for the report was unclear and, in an interview in the same article, Turkish government spokesman Cemil Cicek explicitly dismissed the suggestion that Turkey was planning to create a security zone in northern Iraq—something which would likely be opposed not only by the KRG and the Iraqi government but also by the United States.

Conclusion

Ultimately, although cross-border raids can harm the organization, Turkish hopes of eradicating the PKK presence in northern Iraq depend on persuading the KRG to cooperate. The KRG's peshmerga may not be strong enough to destroy the PKK in its almost inaccessible bases in the mountains, but they can exert considerable pressure by staunching the flow of militants and supplies from the lowlands to PKK camps. In its relations with the KRG to date, Turkey has tended to opt for intimidation rather than engagement; not least because it fears that engaging on an official level with the KRG would be regarded as recognition of its political authority in the Kurdistan Region, which could in turn encourage the KRG to push for full independence. However, as demonstrated both by the confrontation with the peshmerga on February 21 and the February 26 call for their closure, the military bases in northern Iraq continue to fuel considerable resentment amongst Iraqi Kurds. Most believe that the bases are designed to serve as a deterrent to Iraqi Kurdish political aspirations rather than to monitor the KDP-PUK ceasefire or combat the PKK. Under such circumstances, KRG cooperation against the PKK is likely to be grudging at best, and may simply not happen at all.

Gareth Jenkins is a writer and journalist resident in Istanbul, where he has been based for the last 20 years.