

## I-Team Report: Brigade 313

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January 27, 2010 (CHICAGO) (WLS) -- Brigade 313 is the name of an al Qaeda division operated by Chicago's most-wanted terror suspect. The oddly named Brigade 313 stands for the number of Muslim soldiers who stood with the prophet Muhammad during a major battle in the 7th century when three hundred and thirteen men who defeated a much larger enemy force.

Today, a former Pakistani army commando named Ilyas Kashmiri sits atop the modern-day brigade and atop a Chicago criminal indictment.

The 45-year-old Kashmiri is believed to be hiding in the Waziristan region of northwestern Pakistan where he is directing Brigade 313 operations, training young Al Qaeda fighters and planning future attacks on America.

Tonight, 7,000 miles away here in Chicago, Kashmiri's name punctuates a federal grand jury indictment.

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"He's important because he's the brains behind the operation. The brains of these operations rarely put themselves at risk so that they get caught," said Tom Mockaitis, DePaul University professor.

Mockaitis, a terrorism expert, says it is the operatives in radical Islamist groups who are usually snared. In this case that would be the two Chicagoans at the bottom of the terror indictment.

Accused jihadists David Coleman Headley, alias Daood Gilani, and businessman Tawahhur Rana were charged last fall by U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald with a plot to bomb a Danish newspaper. [Click Here to read the Federal Indictment](#)

Then, while continuing to work leads, the FBI says it connected the men to an actual terrorist attack on Mumbai, India in 2008 that killed 165 people and linked them to Ilyas Kashmiri and his brigade 313 that orchestrated the attack.

"I don't think the stakes could be any higher regardless of Kashmiri being charged," said Patrick Blegen, Rana's lawyer.

Rana's lawyer entered a not guilty plea on Monday and today co-defendant David Headley also pleaded not guilty to federal terrorism charges.

The 6-foot tall Ilyas Kashmiri - usually seen with an AK47 or behind a 50 caliber machine gun - carries the scars of war: one eye blown out in a skirmish with the Russians; and he lost an index finger fighting for Al Qaeda.

"He was a specialist in mines, IED's and things of that nature&We know that during the 1990s up really to 9/11 not only did the government of Pakistan, particularly the Interservices Intelligence Agency of Pakistan, assist the Taliban, they also helped al Qaeda," said Mockaitis.

In September, a CIA drone attack on positions in northern Pakistan was thought to have eliminated Kashmiri.

According to the Chicago indictment, when it was evident that Kashmiri had not been killed in the attack the alleged Chicago conspiracy continued.

Court records stating that Chicago defendant David Headley was traveling to Pakistan to meet with Kashmiri when FBI agents arrested him at O'Hare Airport plucked from the lower rungs of Brigade 313.

"I continue to be concerned when the US government becomes overly fixated on going after the leadership. It's sort of like, ya know, like uh trying to weed your lawn by just trying to pick of the tops of the dandelions. If you don't take out the root it doesn't do very much," said Mockaitis.

The CIA has documented his Brigade 313 in European capitals, raising fears that small groups of militants are planning Mumbai-style attacks there.

With brigade's spread and now that Kashmiri sports a long white beard dyed red with henna, he is fashioning himself as successor to Osama Bin Laden. But there is one difference: even Bin Laden is not under a criminal indictment here in Chicago.

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