



# Terrorism Monitor

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### WILL INDIA DEPLOY ITS ARMY AGAINST MAOIST TERRORISTS?

India is considering a large-scale redeployment of specialized counterterrorist commandos based in Kashmir-Jammu and a paramilitary force based in Northeast India to combat a growing Naxalite (Maoist) insurgency in East India. With nearly 300 deaths attributable to Naxalite violence since April, there is concern that existing security forces are losing their grip over the region. The deliberate May 28 derailment of the Jnaneswari Express that killed 150 people appears to have convinced the Home Ministry that new measures were needed to deal with the Maoists (*Telegraph* [Kolkata], June 8; *The Hindu*, June 12). The new plan calls for the redeployment of roughly 10,000 men in 10 battalions drawn from the Rashtriya Rifles and the Assam Rifles. The force would operate across four states, Jharkhand, Bengal, Orissa and Chhattisgarh, to aid the existing state police and federal paramilitary forces. The heartland of the insurgency is in the thick forests of Dantewada in Chattisgarh state. The Home Ministry is also calling for the Armed Forces Special Powers Act to be imposed on the region in order to give the military a freer hand in conducting operations.

A June 10 Meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh failed to come to a decision about the redeployment. Home Minister P. Chidambaram's requests for Army support in the Eastern states were rebuffed by Defense Minister A.K. Antony, who opposes weakening forces currently deployed near the borders with China and Pakistan (*Times of India*, June 11). Chidambaram's presentation may have been better received by

the Prime Minister, who recently identified the Naxalites as the greatest internal threat to India's security (see *Terrorism Monitor*, June 4). It is expected the CCS will meet again soon on the issue.

More specifically, the Army turned down calls for mine-clearing teams to operate in the region, saying such teams could not operate without the prior establishment of intelligence networks and control of the region by infantry forces. Similarly, the use of Special Forces could not happen until the infantry had already taken control on the ground. The Special Forces could not be asked to hold ground, only carry out targeted operations (*Chandigarh Tribune*, June 1; *Times of India*, June 11).

The Assam Rifles is a paramilitary organization with 46 battalions reporting to the Home Ministry but operating under the administrative and operational control of the Indian Army. The unit was originally raised as the Cachar Levy by the British in 1835 for use as a police force against the tribes of the Northeast. Their mission expanded during World War One, when they served in Europe and the Middle East as part of Britain's Gurkha regiments. In World War Two they served closer to home against the Japanese in Burma. The Rifles also fought a successful delaying action against the Chinese in the high-altitude Sino-Indian War of 1962.

These days the Assam Rifles are occupied with small operations against Northeastern insurgent groups such as the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), the tribal Zou People's Army (ZPA), the United National Liberation Front (UNLF – seeking independence for Manipur state) and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) (*Sangai Express*, June 9; *Nagaland Post*, June 1; Hueiyen News Service, June 7; *Imphal Free Press*, June 6). Eighty-five percent of the Assam Rifles is officered by regular army officers on three year assignments and recruiting is now carried out across India (IndiaDefence.com, June 19, 2007).

The much newer Rashtriya Rifles consists of 40,000 men organized in five Counter Insurgency Forces (CIF) named Delta, Kilo, Romeo, Uniform and Victor. The Rashtriya Rifles is an elite counterterrorism unit first raised in 1990 to exclusively tackle terrorists and insurgents active in India's Jammu-Kashmir region. The force is lightly armed but has established a reputation for effectiveness. Personnel are drawn from all Army services and earn additional pay and benefits while serving in the counterterrorist force. Men and officers

usually spend four to five years in the unit before returning to the regular army (*India Today*, June 2).

The Indian Air Force (IAF) will also be asked to do more. At present, the IAF has four helicopters on rescue and evacuation duties in the region, but will land only when a site has been completely secured, even if the mission calls for the evacuation of wounded troops (*Telegraph* [Calcutta], June 8). The Home Ministry is looking for Russian-built Mi-17 helicopters to help ground forces with transport, surveillance and evacuation (*Chandigarh Tribune*, June 10; *India Today*, June 2). Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) have been offered instead.

If a decision to redeploy is not made soon, the onset of the June-September Indian monsoon season may postpone any mass movement of troops and equipment. There are also signs that the Maoists may make a transfer of the Assam Rifles difficult by intensifying insurgent activities in Northeast India (*Asian Age* [Mumbai], June 8).

#### CLASHES WITH SPLA REBELS MOVE INTO SUDAN'S OIL-RICH UNITY STATE

The Government of South Sudan (GoSS) continues to struggle with renegades who have broken away from GoSS security forces after losing in local elections in April to official candidates of the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) (see *Terrorism Monitor*, May 20).

The latest commander to take up arms against the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA – the armed wing of the SPLM) is police Colonel Gatluak Gai (a.k.a. Galwak Gai), who called a Khartoum daily to announce his men had taken 27 machine guns with the intention of joining the forces of another renegade, Lieutenant General George Athor Deng (*Al-Ra'y al-Amm* [Khartoum], May 29). SPLA spokesman General Kuol Diem Kuol claims that Colonel Gai is working to further the interests of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in Khartoum and to “disturb security” in Unity State (*Sudan Tribune*, May 29). On June 2, Colonel Gai's loyalists engaged in a firefight with SPLA troops, with a combined loss of nine lives. One of the captured Gai loyalists was reported by the SPLA to be a member of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) (AFP, June 2).

Colonel Gai's followers were later defeated in a clash with the SPLA in Unity State's Mayom County on June 7, in which 21 of his men were killed and 32

others captured. The SPLA reported Colonel Gai and an estimated 50 men had fled by night into a region of thick bush controlled by the Joint Integrated Units (JIU), forces composed of fighters drawn from both the SPLA and the SAF (*Sudan Tribune*, June 8). Colonel Gai and his fighters were last seen headed for the important Heglig oil field, a territory still disputed by Khartoum and the GoSS (Reuters, June 9).

General George Athor Deng, another defeated candidate who is leading a rebellion in similarly oil-rich Jonglei State, announced on June 2 that he was coordinating operations with Colonel Gai and another failed electoral candidate, David Yauyau, also of Jonglei State (Reuters, June 1; June 9). Yauyau is a SPLA veteran who ran as the candidate of the United Democratic Front (UDF), a pro-independence Southern political party.

Containing some of the largest oil reserves in Sudan, Unity (Wahda) State was part of the South's Upper Nile Province until boundaries were reorganized in 1994. The state has been repeatedly ravaged by government troops, militias and tribal clashes since 1997, resulting in a massive displacement of the local population (*Business Daily Africa*, June 16). Exact boundaries between North and South in the area have yet to be determined with the Southern referendum on independence now just a year away. Unity State is a potential flashpoint that could reignite the civil war between North and South Sudan.

The SPLM also faces dissension from a breakaway group, SPLM-Democratic Change (SPLM-DC). Elements of this group are believed responsible for the assassination of the paramount Shilluk chief, Peter Oyath, on May 22. SPLA forces reported clashing with SPLM-DC forces near Malakal international airport on June 6 (*Sudan Tribune*, June 8; June 10). However, SPLA spokesman General Kuol Diem Kuol has denied reports that SPLA forces entered Malakal (under JIU authority) to kidnap SPLM-DC politicians, including MP Mustafa Gai (*Sudan Tribune*, June 6).

## Perceptions of Success and Failure in ISAF Operations in Marjah, Afghanistan

By Michael A. Innes

NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) launched Operation Moshtarak in the Nad Ali and Lashkar Gah Districts of Afghanistan's Helmand Province in mid-February. The intent was to wrest it from Taliban control and create a "bubble of security" for local governance, described in an ISAF press release as "an Afghan-led initiative to assert government authority in the centre of Helmand Province." [1] The operation involved the deployment of 15,000 Allied and Afghan troops, among them American, British, Danish, Estonian, and Canadian elements from ISAF's Regional Command South, as well as five brigades of Afghan forces drawn from the Afghan National Army (ANA), the Afghan National Police (ANP), Afghan Border Police, and the Afghan Gendarmerie.

Operation Moshtarak was meant to demonstrate several things. Its first priority was to restore Afghanistan's ability to govern an area that had long functioned as a hub of Taliban and narcotics trafficking activity – a "bleeding ulcer", as ISAF Commander General Stanley McChrystal recently called it (*McClatchey Newspapers*, May 29). The operation was also meant to be a litmus test for eventual reassertion of government control over neighboring Kandahar. Fighting in Marjah was intense in the first few days, but subsequently tapered off; some military officers expressed with breathless optimism their opinion that the Taliban had been routed or neutralized as a fighting force in the area. Continued general insecurity and violence, however—three months after the commencement of operations—suggests that reports of their demise were premature, at best. In April, one Taliban leader indicated a clear and deliberate plan in the face of a larger, better-equipped enemy: "We have only withdrawn tactically from some areas," he said. "We never flee." [2]

This makes it difficult to discern what positive lessons might be learned and applied elsewhere, such as the upcoming ISAF offensive in southern Kandahar (*Daily Times [Lahore]*, May 26). Perhaps most frustrating for many observers is the manner in which political pressures have apparently skewed expectations of progress. One

indicator of operational success, for example, has been the speed with which change can be effected – a vital characteristic of the proper employment of military force. More importantly, however, time pressures impose artificial benchmarks on such operations, where a high turnover of personnel has an elastic effect on how short and long term accomplishments are understood and planned for. Worse, the contours of “success”, particularly at higher levels of command, are shaped not by changing conditions on the ground, but by requirements set in the political capitals of NATO member states – which have consistently and simultaneously expressed an understanding that progress in Afghanistan will take time, but that they’d still like to get out sooner rather than later. For some ISAF troop contributors, deadlines for drawdown or complete withdrawal loom close, which leaves less time for mission personnel to rack up observable successes.

Another problem area rests with contentions over the identity of displaced persons. On the surface of things, hundreds of families have fled, claiming anxiety over the possible consequences of being accused of Taliban or al Qaeda membership by one side, or of collaboration with Allied forces by the other. Others, however, are less sympathetic. Haji Mohammad Zaher, District Governor of Marjah, for example, alleged “These families are mainly those who have committed major crimes in the past. Now when the area is under government control, they do not feel safe and flee the district.” The head of Marjah’s Public Order Department, Colonel Ghulam Sakhi, made a similar claim. He suggested that at least some of the displacement has little to do with the conduct of military operations in the area. “I can show you the list of 16 families who had migrated from Uruzgan during Taliban times and were active in the poppy trade... Now they have harvested their poppy and left.” [3]

If true, then some of the displacement is certainly consistent with ISAF aims. It is also corroborated in part by at least one report that the Marjah campaign has had a disruptive effect on the narcotics trade. One smuggler, Haji Abdul Qudos, observed that the operation had put a major crimp in drug shipment through Marjah, a major throughway. Interim subsidies to local farmers were making old ways of doing business increasingly expensive, but “he would be looking for other ways to get the drugs out, not ways to get out of drugs” (*Dawn* [Karachi], March 22).

None of this seems entirely relevant to the larger pool of civilians who may or may not have fled the area. According to Marjah resident Sardar Wali, the operation “was a failure as now both Taliban and foreign troops had caused trouble for the people” (*Pajhwok Afghan News*, May 4). As another former Marjah resident, Haji Aminullah put it, “We have trenches around us, set up by the rebels and foreign troops. As a result, we are confined to our homes” (*Pajhwok Afghan News*, May 26). In late May, a fresh wave of several hundred families (numbers vary) was noted to have left Marjah and Nad Ali for Lashkar Gah.

The short-term gains that come from disrupting the Taliban and narcotics trafficking out of Marjah and environs may well be trumped by the longer-term effect of driving up urban congestion in places like Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital, as well as neighboring Kandahar – not to mention the additional ill will towards ISAF that it will inevitably inspire. Displaced persons and refugees, apparently caught between a rock and a hard place, have the same effect as civilian casualties; the message they bear contradicts ISAF’s claim to be providing security to the population.

Despite good intentions and serious effort put into mitigating collateral damage, almost every negative outcome, from civilian deaths to population displacement to continued fighting, has been entirely predictable. This implies that a declaration of failure in Marjah now is just as premature as were some declarations of victory three months ago. It may also suggest a certain degree of willfulness on the part of NATO forces in Afghanistan: military operations, by their very nature, are about seizing and holding terrain. This can’t help but relegate the fate of human beings to secondary status, a condition that is fundamentally at odds with a population-centric counterinsurgency. It remains to be seen, on balance, how this will shape future perceptions of success and failure – particularly once ISAF turns to much more challenging objectives like securing Kandahar.

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Notes:

1. ISAF Joint Command – Afghanistan, “Operation Moshtarak,” ISAF News Release (Kabul, ISAF Joint Command Public Affairs Office, 13 February 2010). Available at <http://www.isaf.nato.int/images/stories/File/2010-02-CA-059-Background-Operation%20Moshtarak.pdf>.

2. Hewad, “Taliban Defiant Following Marja Operation,” *Institute for War & Peace Reporting / Afghan Reconstruction Report*, Issue 358 (April 14, 2010).

3. Mohammad Ilyas Dayee, “Marja Residents Flee Unrest,” *Institute for War & Peace Reporting / Afghan Reconstruction Report*, Issue 361 (May 20, 2010).

## AQAP’s New Strategy: Targeting Westerners and Promoting the Individual Jihad

By Murad Batal al-Shishani

A recent article appearing on jihadi websites insists that al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) members will “carry out Osama bin Laden’s orders” to capture and execute U.S. nationals if jihadist captives in the United States receive death sentences. *Sada al-Malahim*, the magazine of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), carried the article entitled, “Here We Are Osama” in its May 19 issue. The article praises the key jihadist prisoners Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, Ramzi bin al-Shaybah, Walid Muhammad Salih bin Atash (a.k.a. Khallad), Mustafa al-Husawi and Ammar al-Blushi, all facing charges related to the 9/11 attacks.

The article describes the need for jihadis to adopt a new tactic:

The lion of jihad Shaykh Osama bin Laden has lately given directives on the oppressed brothers in the U.S. prisons, on top of them is

the jihadist brother Khalid Shaykh Muhammad. We are Shaykh Osama’s soldiers in the Arabian Peninsula and we will carry out his orders. If our brothers, the prisoners, are sentenced to death, we will kill every U.S. prisoner we capture. We call on our soldiers to capture and kidnap Americans, and to apply, in every way possible, the common war rule that says “To capture is better than to kill.” [1]

The article refers to Osama bin Laden’s March 25 audiotape, in which he threatened to kill American captives if Khalid Shaykh Muhammad were executed (al-Jazeera, March 25).

At the same time it seems that AQAP might resort to such tactics as targeting American and other Western nationals in order to encourage Jihad al-Fardi (individual jihad) and to deepen the crisis of the Yemeni state. It appears as though AQAP aims to mobilize young Yemenis by putting into practice Osama bin Laden’s famous slogan, “Do not consult anybody about killing Americans.” Encouraging such tactics will create a type of leaderless jihad and will spread the ideology of Salafi-Jihadism in Yemen. The preference of AQAP for such tactics is indicated in the latest interview with American jihadi ideologue Anwar al-Awlaki (currently residing in Yemen), conducted and released by al-Malahim Media Foundation (the media arm of AQAP). Al-Awlaki praised American Major Nidal Malik Hasan, who has been charged with the murder of 13 of his colleagues at Fort Hood in Texas in November 2009:

Yes, Nidal is one of my students, and this gives me honor. Nidal’s operation was such a great act of heroism. We pray to the Almighty God to grant him resolve, to protect him, and to drive away his grief. I second the action of Nidal Hasan and, further, call the Muslims in the U.S. army to follow his steps. The good things do remove those that are evil. I further call on Muslims in general to follow the steps of Nidal; to perform jihad either by words or by hand. Nidal Hasan’s example is such a great one. We ask God, glory be to Him, to help many Muslims follow this example (alfalojaweb.info, May 23).

By targeting Western nationals in incidents such as April’s failed attempt to assassinate the UK’s ambassador to Yemen, al-Qaeda suicide bombers can play a major role in deepening the crisis of the Yemeni state. After he became leader of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia in 2004,

Abdul Aziz al-Muqren (a.k.a. Abu Hajer) launched a series of abductions and executions of Western nationals during a period of clashes between Saudi authorities and the jihadis. The resulting situation created turmoil inside Saudi Arabia at that time. [2]

In Yemen's case this could badly impact the economy as the tourism sector contributes approximately 3% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Yemen. This sector has already been negatively affected by the political crisis in Yemen. The Yemeni daily *al-Watan* revealed that al-Alamiyah, one of the biggest tourism companies working in Yemen, intends to lay off employees in the coming days because of a "decline in its revenues as a result of poor conditions as a result of terrorism, which led to the destruction of tourism and the reluctance of tourists to come to Yemen." The newspaper reported that the company received only 5,000 tourists in 2009, compared with ten times that number before 2007 (*al-Watan-Yemen*, May 15).

AQAP aims to encourage a Nidal Malik Hasan-style of individual jihad among young Yemenis by urging them to target Westerners (Americans in particular), in order to create the sort of chaos that could deepen the crisis of the Yemeni state, especially now that AQAP is presenting itself as an alternative for all Yemeni people.

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Notes:

1. The magazine was downloaded from <http://www.atahadi.com/vb/showthread.php?t=19750>
2. The author was at Saudi Arabia at that time and witnessed these events.

## Will al-Qaeda Survive the Loss of its Leadership?

By Andrew McGregor

With rumors emerging once again of the death of Osama bin Laden, it seems like an appropriate time to examine the future of

al-Qaeda in the event of the elimination of Bin Laden and his Egyptian second-in-command, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri. Both Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri have been rumored to be dead before, but with the American drone campaign continuing to take out high level al-Qaeda personnel on the Afghan-Pakistan frontier, there is every possibility that we might soon wake up to a world without Bin Laden or his Egyptian deputy and be faced with the question of just what that means for global security.

How Important is Bin Laden Anyway?

Bin Laden is not a religious scholar; he is not a military planner; he is not even a politician. He will, however, always be the man who brought down the twin towers and struck the Pentagon itself. Beside that, he is a Saudi. This is an important consideration in a movement that has always lacked qualified or inspiring religious scholars in its leadership – at least having a Saudi from the Land of the Two Holy Places (Mecca and Medina) at the top of the al-Qaeda totem pole gives some veneer of respectability to the organization. In the event of his demise, the calculating and ruthless al-Zawahiri appears to be an uninspiring choice for leader, despite his importance in day to day operations. Beyond al-Zawahiri there is little evidence of a plan of succession, and as notable figures in the movement continue to be reaped by the American drone campaign the number of well-known possibilities continues to shrink.

As we approach the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, al-Qaeda still has nothing resembling a coherent political program other than promises of some ill-defined Caliphate. In this sense they have been far outstripped by Islamist movements like Egypt's Muslim Brothers, who have passed through violent radicalism into grass-roots political development based on thoroughly planned communications, education and recruitment programs (see [ikhwanweb.com](http://ikhwanweb.com)). The Brotherhood has so efficiently monopolized Islamist politics in Egypt that al-Qaeda has made few inroads into the Arab world's largest nation since al-Zawahiri and several of his colleagues fled Egypt for Afghanistan in 1998. Sudan, a country where the local Muslim Brothers share power with the military, is similarly free of al-Qaeda activity since the departure of Bin Laden in the mid-1990s. Hizb ut-Tahrir, strong in Asia and the UK, is another international Islamist movement that will probably outlast al-Qaeda as a political force. Much of HuT's success in Central and South (*Daily Star* [Dhaka], May 31). Asia has been gained through pamphleteering

rather than terrorism. Large-scale and well-funded conservative missionary movements like the Tablighi Jamaat, though not specifically political in nature, will continue to create conditions abroad that will foster the growth of political Islam. While Bin Laden's bombs and audiotapes dominate the headlines, more thoughtful organizations are steadily advancing the Islamist project without him, and in some cases, despite him.

### Break with the Taliban

For some years now, the Taliban have been practically synonymous with al-Qaeda – indeed, some media operations still find it difficult (or possess a willingness) to distinguish between the two. The reality, however, is that the Taliban are a well developed ethnic-political-religious movement that ruled a nation (however crudely) when al-Qaeda was little more than a group of fugitives seeking refuge at their gate.

There is little question today that the Taliban's relationship with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is more important to it than its relationship with al-Qaeda, which cannot offer anything comparable in terms of intelligence and political and financial support. Taliban strategists have already realized that continued association with al-Qaeda complicates the possibility of a negotiated settlement with Kabul that would receive international approval, a necessary first step in returning to power. Considering what the Taliban has so far invested in its defense of al-Qaeda leaders and its own Pashtunwali code, it is difficult for the movement to renounce al-Qaeda altogether. The Taliban leadership has, however, begun distancing itself from al-Qaeda (Afghan Islamic Press, April 21, 2009; see also *Terrorism Monitor*, April 30, 2009). Many Taliban leaders have long resented the loss of Taliban-ruled Afghanistan due to the arrogance of Bin Laden and his Arab entourage. The elimination of Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri would certainly create conditions for the Taliban to cut itself loose from the rest of al-Qaeda, which represents little more than a political weight to the movement.

Otherwise, the Taliban will continue to pursue a dual strategy of making the foreign occupation forces as uncomfortable as possible while demonstrating to the Karzai government that it cannot rule a post-occupation Afghanistan without bringing the Taliban into the government. Across the border, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) may make respectful noises about Bin Laden and his exiled comrades, but in reality the movement already looks to their fellow Pashtun

tribesmen, Mullah Omar and the leadership of the "Islamic Emirate (of Afghanistan)," for guidance, mediation and inspiration.

### How Much Operational Control Does al-Qaeda Central Exercise?

Regional commands appear to have replaced a centralized command structure in al-Qaeda. In practice, however, this is more like issuing charters than opening chapters. The most important of these are regional commands like al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). The financial strength of Bin Laden is largely overrated – there has been little evidence of core al-Qaeda's ability to fund anyone for some years now. This may be through difficulties in transferring funds under new financial regulations or because Bin Laden has largely exhausted his funds, or some measure of both factors. Militant funding is now done through internal networks and is no longer directed from the center. .

There appears to be little operational cooperation or coordination between the regional commands. To some degree, the possibility of infiltration by intelligence or security agencies precludes cooperation with individuals not personally known to al-Qaeda operatives. Combined with expanding communications surveillance, this makes coordination or central direction extremely difficult. Al-Zawahiri's criticism of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's brutal pursuit of sectarian violence as leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq demonstrates a lack of effective central control of even one of the movement's largest commands (Middle East Online, December 7, 2005; but see *Terrorism Focus*, October 21, 2005 for questions surrounding the authenticity of such criticism).

Perhaps predictably, AQAP has proven the most receptive to tactical advice from al-Qaeda central, but otherwise the movement is very much under the command of experienced local jihad leaders like Nasir al-Wuhayshi (a.k.a. Abu Basir) (al-Jazeera, May 16). Of the three major al-Qaeda commands, AQAP may be the most likely to make a continued go of it on its own while still adhering to the basic al-Qaeda ideology should the core leadership collapse.

In North Africa, however, AQIM, appears to be steadily sliding into criminality rather than political/religious insurgency – the lure of kidnapping ransoms and the financial rewards of drug trafficking seem to be turning

AQIM into the North African version of the Philippines' Abu Sayyaf movement, a criminal organization which uses the rhetoric of Islamism to justify its otherwise indefensible behavior. Infiltration, suspicion and rivalry all sap AQIM's effectiveness as a jihad movement.

Somalia's al-Shabaab movement has made numerous declarations of loyalty to Bin Laden but has yet to be granted distinction as the Somali arm of al-Qaeda, indicating that al-Qaeda, in the minds of the leadership, remains primarily an Arab movement (Reuters, February 1; *Kuwait Times*, February 2). Non-Arab Muslims remain useful to al-Qaeda, but will never be granted their own franchise. Nevertheless, non-Arab radical Islamist movements such as Kashmir's Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) have demonstrated through the 2008 Mumbai assault that al-Qaeda direction, planning or funding is not necessary to carry out well-organized mass casualty terrorist attacks. The elimination of al-Qaeda's core leadership will result in the inevitable localization of the "global jihad"; or in jihadist terms, a refocus on the "Near Enemy" over the "Far Enemy."

#### Religious Limitations of al-Qaeda

The radical Salafism espoused by al-Qaeda has benefited enormously from Saudi Arabia's continuing use of its oil wealth to promulgate Saudi-style Wahhabism throughout the Islamic world. Nevertheless, there is resistance from other well-established forms of Islam to the austere measures of the Salafists. Al-Qaeda opposition to Sufism, Shi'ism and virtually every form of Islam except their own vision of Salafi-Jihadism will always limit the growth of the movement. With Saudi money and the active missionary work of religiously conservative groups such as the Tablighi Jamaat, Salafism will continue to grow, but the question is whether al-Qaeda will continue to grow in parallel with it.

Though there has always been an attraction in Salafist Islam to takfir (the practice of declaring Muslims apostate and hence eligible for execution), for al-Qaeda the practice of takfir has almost become a new pillar of Islam. In the hands of scholars like the 14th century's Ibn Taymiyya, takfir was a means of preserving the Islamic community from the nominally Muslim Mongol hordes. In al-Qaeda's unskillful hands, takfir has caused dissension throughout the Islamic community and caused the deaths of thousands of Muslims. Al-Qaeda would have difficulty finding responsible Islamic scholars who would support the idea that deciding which Muslims

are or are not apostate should be placed in the hands of gunmen.

Sectarianism of the type practiced by al-Qaeda in Iraq and al-Qaeda's would-be franchise in Somalia has resulted in backlashes that threaten their very existence. AQI's preoccupation with establishing Sunni dominance over Iraq's Shi'a majority only strengthened Shi'a military and political capabilities and prevented the establishment of a national resistance capable of ending the occupation. Even anti-occupation Sunni insurgents in Iraq were easily recruited into the militias of the anti-al-Qaeda "Awakening Councils" in Iraq after experiencing al-Qaeda's tactics first-hand. AQI never recovered from these developments and it now seems apparent that Iraq's political future will not lay with the establishment of al-Qaeda's "Islamic State of Iraq."

In Somalia, al-Shabaab diverted its energy from pursuing its assault on Mogadishu to open a new campaign against Sufism, even though most Somalis are associated with one of the traditional Somali Sufi orders. Sufi shrines and tombs of notable Sufis were smashed with hammers and their contents strewn through the desert (Raxanreeb.com, March 24; see also *Terrorism Monitor*, April 1). Unsurprisingly, this did not result in a military or religious triumph for al-Shabaab; to the contrary, this campaign inspired the development of a new and powerful Sufi militia (al-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'a) that has propped up the tottering Transitional Federal Government by offering determined resistance to al-Shabaab's efforts at expansion.

Both AQI and al-Shabaab took their cues from the sectarian, takfiri rhetoric of core al-Qaeda. In the first case it resulted in a nearly insurmountable setback; in the second it placed a formidable roadblock to further success. If there is central planning at work here, it is clearly not reality-based.

#### Conclusion

Al-Qaeda central command will inevitably move from northwest Pakistan if the current leadership is eliminated. Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri's presence there is enforced. While inaccessibility has advantages for a fugitive, it has little to recommend it to the self-styled leader of a global jihad.

The survival of Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri to this point seems rather remarkable, particularly if this has been



achieved without the intervention of some external agency or facilitator. Will their successors be as fortunate, or will their own deaths follow in quick succession? More likely, we will be looking at the end of “al-Qaeda Central”, already a largely symbolic institution.

Jihad is not a new concept; what is new is al-Qaeda’s attempt to impose a cookie-cutter Salafist interpretation of jihad that focuses on terrorism rather than military resistance. The very nature of this phenomenon precludes its success, something that has become apparent to many disenchanted jihadis, some of whom have issued “Revisions” questioning the legitimacy of al-Qaeda’s relentless pursuit of violence as a religious and political measure. While some of these individuals have renounced violence, others will continue jihad under their own terms and without spiritual or strategic direction from “core al-Qaeda.” Sooner or later, the future of the global jihad will be in their hands.

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