



# Terrorism Monitor

In-Depth Analysis of the War on Terror

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Uighur member of the TIP

## LIBYAN AL-QAEDA LEADER SAYS JIHAD IS THE ONLY SOLUTION FOR LIBYA

A Libyan al-Qaeda spokesman has released a 31-minute video claiming al-Qaeda created the conditions that allowed for revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt and inspired the ongoing rebellion in Libya (Ansar1.info, March 12). Produced by al-Sahab Media Productions, the video entitled “To Our People in Libya” features leading jihad ideologue Abu Yahya al-Libi (a.k.a. Muhammad Hassan Abu Bakr or Hassan Qayid).

Al-Libi was captured by NATO forces in Afghanistan in 2002 and detained without trial at Bagram Prison until he escaped in 2005. Since then, he is believed to be living in the tribal regions of northwest Pakistan where he has become an important spokesman for al-Qaeda due to his training in Islamic scholarship, producing numerous videotaped messages. Al-Libi’s brother, Abdulwahab Muhammad Kayid, was one of 110 former members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) freed by Qaddafi’s regime on February 16 (*Guardian*, March 11).

Al-Libi called on Libyans to follow the example of Sidi Omar al-Mukhtar, the Libyan national hero who led the resistance against Italian occupation in the 1920s. Al-Libi used the term “Shaykh of the Martyrs” to refer to al-Mukhtar, whose legacy has been claimed by both Qaddafi and the Libyan rebels (see *Terrorism Monitor*, March 10).

Al-Libi denounced the West for its support of “the Pharaoh Hosni Mubarak” and “the tyrant Ben Ali,” claiming that Western nations care only for their

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own interests without regard for Muslims enduring dictatorship. Citing four decades of mistreatment at the hands of the Qaddafi regime, al-Libi accused Qaddafi of using the Libyans “as a testing ground for his violent, rambling and disgusting thoughts.”

With rebel forces steadily falling back on their stronghold of Benghazi under Libyan military pressure, al-Libi warned of the price that would accompany failure: “Retreating will mean decades of harsher oppression and greater injustices than what you have endured [so far].” He also warned the rebels against surrendering their weapons to loyalist forces, suggesting instead that they build stockpiles of weapons for future use.

The Libyan militant mocked U.S. expressions of sympathy for the rebels, saying that al-Qaeda had shattered the “barrier of fear” that had restrained Muslims from rising against their governments: “There is no dignity without cost, and no dignity without sacrifice.” Though Qaddafi has claimed numerous times that the Libyan revolt is led by al-Qaeda operatives, there is no evidence so far that this is the case.

Al-Libi stated that only the rule of Shari’a can save Libyans and other Muslims living under the rule of Western-backed dictatorships: “The only solution for our country is jihad for Islam.”

#### TURKEY’S OPPOSITION TO MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LIBYA

Ankara continues to forge an independent identity for its foreign policy by rejecting calls from some NATO partners for military intervention in the Libyan rebellion. Of all the NATO nations, Turkey has the closest historical and economic ties to the North African nation, a relationship that dates back to the period of Ottoman rule in Libya (1551-1912).

Turkey has adopted what it describes as a “principled approach” to the crisis in Libya, though it is certain that political chaos and uncertainty do little to further Turkey’s economic relationship with Libya, which now includes more than \$15 billion worth of projects in Libya employing 25,000 Turkish workers and bilateral trade worth \$2.4 billion in 2010. Ankara’s measured response to the Libyan insurrection was described by Foreign Ministry deputy undersecretary Selim Yenel: “Turkish foreign policy is based on the rule of law, justice, human rights and universal values. At the same

time, we have concerns for the large Turkish expat community in Libya. We have to be very careful in our approach and not risk any reprisals against our citizens or the harming of our interests” (*Today’s Zaman*, March 6). Though some 20,000 individuals (including non-Turks) were evacuated from Libya by Turkish ships and aircraft, there are believed to be several thousand Turkish nationals who have chosen to remain in the country.

While Turkey was the first country to call for Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak to step down, it has not taken this approach in Libya. Unlike other NATO countries, Turkey has maintained official and even informal contacts with the Libyan regime during the rebellion, with Prime Minister Erdogan disclosing he had called Qaddafi personally to discuss the crisis and to urge the Libyan ruler to appoint a political figure with popular support to seek a solution (*al-Arabiya*, March 14). Turkey did not freeze Libyan assets or make any change in its diplomatic representation. Ankara has, however, indicated that it would respect any decisions regarding sanctions or military intervention that are passed by the UN Security Council. Libyan dissident Abdul Hafiz Ghoga, the deputy leader of the rebel National Libyan Council, has demanded that Turkey give the rebel group official recognition and direct support, but without success (*Journal of the Turkish Weekly*, March 12).

Ankara has repeatedly expressed concerns that foreign military intervention, particularly any involving the United States or former colonial powers, would run the immediate risk of delegitimizing not only the Libyan rebellion, but any further revolts against autocratic rule in the Arab world. Said Erdogan: ““We need to give the Libyan people permission to chart their own course” (Reuters, March 14). There is also uncertainty regarding what kind of administration or regime might follow the expulsion of Qaddafi, recognizing the possibility that a rebel victory might be exploited by other forces, including the radical Islamist movement.

Turkey has pointed out that NATO’s mandate does not cover events occurring in Libya. As Prime Minister Erdogan bluntly told a gathering in Hanover, Germany: “What has NATO got to do with Libya? NATO’s intervention in Libya is out of the question. We are against such a thing” (*Today’s Zaman*, March 6). Turkish President Abdullah Gul later questioned whether military intervention was even desired by the rebels, who used the slogan “Libyans can do it alone!” in the early phases of the rebellion: “A direct NATO intervention in

Libya is out of the question... The people, government and opposition in Libya do not want a foreign force in the country” (AFP, March 14).

Turkey has also pointed out that there are alternative means of helping Libyans. According to the Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu: “We are not abandoning Libya. We are taking a temporary measure. We will take every step necessary in the humanitarian aid of the Libyan people” (Anatolia, March 12). Turkey joined with the United Arab Emirates to provide the first humanitarian aid shipment to Libya since the crisis began, sending a Turkish naval frigate to accompany two ships carrying 388 tons of food, 32 tons of medicine, water, portable shelters, mobile ovens and a Turkish Red Crescent team (*Hurriyet*, March 13; Gulf News, March 13). The Turkish foreign minister noted: “This humanitarian assistance is not aimed at a specific group or region, but at the entire Libyan nation. We aim, circumstances permitting, to have our assistance continue to flow into Libya and reach regions in need throughout the country” (Today’s Zaman, March 14).

The Turkish Prime Minister has been heavily criticized in parliament and the press for accepting the Qaddafi International Prize for Human Rights in a ceremony last November (*Hurriyet*, February 21; AFP, November 26, 2010). Critics within Turkey have also complained the government’s response places Ankara too close to the Qaddafi regime, but there are signs that Turkey is ready to resume normal relations with Tripoli when the crisis ends. Turkish firm TAV Airports Holding has already announced it is preparing to return to Tripoli to resume work on the construction of two new terminal buildings at Tripoli Airport, part of Turkey’s substantial economic role in developing Libya (*Hurriyet*, March 17).

## **Al-Shabaab Threats Panic Kenya as Fighting Erupts on the Border with Somalia**

*By Muhyadin Ahmad Roble*

Since the 1998 al-Qaeda attack on the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi and the 2002 attack on an Israeli-owned hotel and Israeli airliner in Mombasa, Kenya has considered Somalia a key security threat. To combat this threat, Kenya has tightened its border with Somalia and engaged in the training of troops for Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Kenyan president Mwai Kibaki said last year that the Somali Islamists had grown from a regional challenge to a global problem. [1]

Kibaki expressed the Kenyan government’s total commitment to working closely with Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) member states, the African Union and the TFG in the search for a sustainable peace. This statement angered al-Shabaab, the Somali Islamist movement that is currently battling a combined African Union, TFG and Ethiopian offensive that has included battles along the Kenyan border (see *Terrorism Monitor* Brief, March 10). Ali Mohamud, a Somali-Kenyan political analyst based in Nairobi, said the president’s position was very clear: “Kenya must fight Islamists inside Somalia before they fight us in our land.” [2]

Kenya officially closed its border with Somalia (which divides ethnic Somali communities in north-eastern Kenya and southern Somalia) in January 2007 to prevent the entrance of Islamists. However, this has never stopped extremists from crossing into Kenya as refugees and then being smuggled further on into the Kenyan capital of Nairobi. Even after the border was closed, many former senior leaders of Somalia’s Islamic Courts Union (ICU) were commonly seen in places like Eastleigh, a district of Nairobi that is home to a large ethnic-Somali community.

On February 27, al-Shabaab threatened to attack Kenya for allowing Ethiopian and TFG forces to use its territory around the town of Mandera to launch a successful attack on the Somali town of Bulo Hawa, held by al-Shabaab. [3] Kenyan police reported arrests of suspected al-Shabaab members in a roundup in

Eastleigh Estate and announced the names of other suspects being sought in a terrorist plot targeting Nairobi (The Standard [Nairobi], March 7; Nairobi Star, March 8).

While, the Kenyan government has maintained that it is not involved in the fights, residents suggest otherwise, claiming to have seen the Kenyan military providing logistical support to both the Ethiopians and Somali government forces, which were seen in the district headquarters, the customs office, the central police station, the prison and even patrolling the streets. [4]

On February 28, three members of parliament from Kenya's North Eastern Province demanded the Kenyan military take action to expel Ethiopian troops that had reportedly taken over the town after local residents had fled. "The Ethiopian forces are firing missiles from Mandera into Somalia, thereby provoking al-Shabaab," said Mandera East MP Mohamed Hussein Ali. [5] On the same day, however, commissioner of the Kenya Police Mathew Kirai Iteere denied the presence of any foreign troops in Mandera. [6] A Nairobi daily reported that 600 TFG soldiers trained in Kenya had been moved up to Mandera in Kenyan military trucks in preparation for deployment into Somalia to link up with other TFG troops in Bulu Hawa (*Daily Nation* [February 27]).

Although al-Shabaab has threatened Kenya many times, the threat is now real not only for those in Mandera but for the whole nation. In late February, al-Shabaab spokesman Shaykh Ali Mahmud Raage (a.k.a. Shaykh Ali Dheere) told reporters in Mogadishu:

Kenya has long been working to undermine the existence of the Islamic sharia in Somalia... It has opened training camps inside [Somali] territories to train apostate Somali militants and also offered military bases to Ethiopian forces who are invading the neighboring Islamic region of Gedo. We shall no longer tolerate the constant aggression and ill acts of Kenya against our Muslim society. Kenya will bear responsibility for the consequences of the continuing aggression... Previous warnings to Kenya were nothing compared to this one; we are going to retaliate against [Kenya] harshly (*Daily Nation* [Nairobi], February 28; AFP, February 28).

Kenya was again threatened on March 7 by al-Shabaab commander Mukhtar Robow "Ali Mansur" for Kenya's

alleged cooperation with Ethiopian and TFG troops (Shabelle Media Network, March 7; Suna Times, March 7).

Somali Islamists have carried out a number of attacks on Kenyan security personnel along the border. In the last instance, al-Shabaab fighters attacked officers of the General Service Unit (GSU) who were patrolling the Kenyan-Somali border region near Libio Post, 18 km west of the Somali border. One officer was seriously wounded in the ambush (al-Jazeera, July 21, 2010; Reuters, July 21, 2010).

Al-Shabaab's threats have caused Kenyans to panic and are now condemning their government for putting their security at risk by allowing foreign troops to use Kenyan land as a launch pad for attacks on Islamist-held towns.

On February 28, Kenyan Police Commissioner Mathew Iteere said the threats by al-Shabaab could not be taken for granted, considering the movement had issued a similar warning to Uganda before the bombing of Kampala residents viewing last summer's Soccer World Cup (see *Terrorism Monitor* Brief, July 16, 2010). Although he urged Kenyans not to panic, Iteere warned citizens to be extra careful while in social settings and transportation terminals (Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, February 28; *Daily Nation* [Nairobi], February 28).

The fact that al-Shabaab has recently lost a number of towns, including the border town of Bulu Hawa, does not mean that they should be underestimated. According to an international relations student from Mandera: "With the constant unemployment in the country, there are possibilities that a number of youth in the northern region could switch to join up with the al-Shabaab insurgency." [7]

Al-Shabaab threats have forced Kenya's government to increase security expenditures in the supplementary budget to be tabled in parliament in two weeks' time. "I can't give you a figure yet but the security budget has had to go up to make sure Kenya can secure itself," said permanent secretary of the treasury Joseph Kinyua (The Star [Nairobi], February 28). Considering the apparent ease with which the deadly Kampala bombings were carried out, there is a high probability that al-Shabaab could attempt a retaliatory attack within Kenya.



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Notes:

1. Statement from Kenyan president Mwai Kibaki, July 30, 2010, Nairobi.
2. Author's Interview with Somali-Kenyan political analyst Ali Mohamud, March 5, 2011, Nairobi.
3. Al-Shabaab spokesman, Press conference, February 27, 2011, Mogadishu.
4. Interviews with Mandera residents, February 27, 2011.
5. Interviews with North-Eastern Province MPs, February 28, 2011, Nairobi.
6. Interview with Kenya Police Commissioner Mathew Iteere, February 28, 2011, Nairobi.
7. Interview with Abdurahman Abdi, United States International University, March 8, 2011, Nairobi.

## What Do the Uprisings in The Middle East Mean for al-Qaeda?

*By Michael Ryan*

There are currently two arguments about what the recent uprisings across the Middle East mean for al-Qaeda. The optimists argue that non-violent revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt have stripped al-Qaeda's narrative of its power. The pessimists counter that al-Qaeda is far from finished and will wait for the dust to settle, disappointment to set in, and the revolutionary spirit to turn bitter before it takes advantage of countries weakened by revolution. Perhaps, a better approach to this question is to be found in al-Qaeda's strategic literature and its traditional relationship to each country in question.

Al-Qaeda represents a revolution within Islam. Its strategic literature recounts that Bin Laden commissioned a series of detailed regional studies to inform him about the best approach to jihadist revolution based on the facts of each case. Several years before 9/11, these studies were distributed among Bin Laden's top advisers. [1] From this knowledge base, al-Qaeda's leadership framed a flexible and opportunistic regional strategy that assigned operational priorities to countries based on the likelihood of success and the extent to which "global jihad" against the United States could be advanced by al-Qaeda's involvement.

Those countries considered too hard to tackle directly were not abandoned entirely; instead al-Qaeda encouraged local jihadists to engage in terrorism against those governments without much outside help. Meanwhile al-Qaeda concentrated on attacking the United States and organizing al-Qaeda cells within top priority countries. The concept was that al-Qaeda would eventually come to the assistance of local jihadists in low-priority countries after success in high priority countries.

According to al-Qaeda strategist Abu Bakr Naji, the idea behind the movement's prioritization was to avoid expending resources, even in important countries, without a clear return. [2] For example, Egypt, with almost 25% of the population of all the Arab League countries combined, has always been extremely important for al-Qaeda. Nevertheless, Mubarak's Egypt is the prime example of a country in which al-Qaeda operations were considered too difficult. So Egypt was featured prominently in al-Qaeda's propaganda and was the subject of multiple videos and three books written by Ayman al-Zawahiri, the latest of which appeared just 59 days before the first demonstrations in Tahrir Square. [3] However, al-Qaeda's propaganda, which encouraged insurrection and terrorism, did not appeal to the Egyptian population. Internally, al-Qaeda used Egypt for lessons learned during the disastrous jihadist campaigns during the 1990s when other jihadist groups were virtually destroyed by Egyptian security forces.

Tunisia has been like a smaller version of Egypt for al-Qaeda. It was ruled by a strong central government, aided by powerful security forces. Tunisia experienced incidents of jihadist terrorism over the years, but al-Qaeda considered it an appropriate area for agitation and propaganda, rather than a target for its own operations. It was not considered a priority target for al-Qaeda.

After 9/11, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan were top priority countries in which al-Qaeda's leadership arranged for jihadist networks to be funded and manned for guerrilla warfare. Al-Qaeda currently has well-established networks in Yemen and Pakistan. Non-Arab Pakistan marches to its own beat; its grave problems after the Arab uprisings are no different from before. Yemen has been influenced by the uprisings, but al-Qaeda's local impact is negligible in comparison to powerful tribal and sectarian forces. Saudi Arabia has witnessed Shiite demonstrations and there are serious concerns that these could spread, but al-Qaeda exerts no influence on Shiite communities.

Libya was never a priority country for al-Qaeda. Its indigenous Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) did ally itself to al-Qaeda in 2007, but was defeated by Gaddafi's forces and by 2009 was essentially out of combat (for the LIFG, see *Terrorism Monitor*, May 5, 2005; November 3, 2005; June 18, 2009). Therefore, it was not in a position to support the recent uprisings and did not inspire the current Libyan opposition, whose public posture is incompatible with al-Qaeda's doctrine. The West supports the opposition and appears to be trying to calibrate its response to avoid doing too much or too little, either of which could help al-Qaeda's narrative. The ultimate outcome in Libya is difficult to gauge at this time, but so far, events there have not played to al-Qaeda's advantage.

Even if one factors in Jordan, Iraq, and Algeria, it appears that al-Qaeda is in approximately the same position now as it was before the uprisings, with its regional appeal declining and its networks under severe pressure everywhere. This conclusion does not diminish the importance of uprisings across the Arab world. The significance of these uprisings, however, should not be judged using al-Qaeda as a metric; each has its own internal logic and history. In the end, if only the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions prove successful, a major part of the Arab world will have unfurled the banner of modernization and democracy in a culturally acceptable model, which could become a new beacon for a large part of the Arab Middle East. In the meantime, local forces in places that experienced uprisings will continue to trump al-Qaeda's transnational narrative. In the longer term, if none of these uprisings improve the lot of their people, al-Qaeda, an organization still capable of doing great damage, will be looking for new opportunities.

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Notes:

1. The author of these studies was Syrian jihad strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri.
2. Abu Bakr Naji, *Idarat al-Tawahush* (The Management of Savagery), p. 15. Naji's work as translated by William McCants may be downloaded from: <http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/olin/images/Management%20of%20Savagery%20-%202005-23-2006.pdf>. The Arabic version is available at: <http://www.tawhed.ws/a?a=chr3ofzr>. For commentary on his work, see *Terrorism Focus*, March 17, 2005; *Terrorism Monitor*, September 10, 2009.
3. Ayman al-Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner* (in Arabic) 2nd edition, Sahab Media, November 27, 2010.

## Jihad in China? Marketing the Turkistan Islamic Party

By Jacob Zenn

Since its creation in 2008, the Uyghur-based Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) has vowed to carry out jihad against the Chinese occupiers of Xinjiang, the massive western province of China that is known to its Muslim inhabitants as East Turkistan. While evidence of actual operations in China is slight and the movement appears to remain confined to its training camps in tribal Pakistan, the TIP has tried to reach out to the larger Islamic world through a sophisticated and glossy internet magazine, *Islamic Turkistan*.

All eight editions of *Islamic Turkistan* have been written exclusively in the Arabic language. Thus, the intended readership is not the Muslims of Turkistan. The majority of Muslims in Xinjiang Province are Uyghurs who speak a Turkic language unrelated to Arabic, but there are also significant numbers of other Muslim Turkic peoples in Xinjiang, such as Kazakhs, Uzbeks, and Kyrgyz, few of whom read or speak Arabic aside from the Islamic clergy and scholars. The only non-Arabic text in the entire publication is in the TIP's logo, where the Arabic, Uyghur, and English names of the movement are inscribed around two swords and a Koran.

The content of the magazine is not intended for Muslims in China either. For example, the sixth, seventh and eighth editions of *Islamic Turkistan* feature articles titled, "Get to Know the Muslims in China." The installment in the sixth edition introduces the Dungan minority group (commonly known as "Hui" in Mandarin and English) and reviews the history of the Dungan Muslims in China, from the first delegation of Arabs who brought Islam to the "Sultanate of Dunganstan" in 651 C.E. to the present. The magazine addresses the important question of why China's large Hui community has shied from joining the jihad. The author blames several "historical" factors for why "we don't see any groups or individuals from the Dungan in jihad." These factors include:

- Using the same language as the "infidel Chinese."
- Calling the land of China home.
- The absence of Islamic movements calling for Dungan/Hui independence.
- The ability of China to manipulate the Muslim Uyghurs and the Dungan/Hui into being enemies for over three centuries.
- The influence of the Muslim Brotherhood on the Dungan/Hui in the 1950s and 1960s which caused them not to participate in jihad activities.

What Happened to Abd al-Haq al-Turkistani?

Notably, the most recent issues of *Islamic Turkistan* do not discuss the death of Abd al-Haq al-Turkistani, the TIP leader killed by a U.S. drone strike in North Waziristan in February 2010 (see *Terrorism Monitor*,

March 11, 2010). Although these editions include articles dated after his death and the seventh edition even features a speech by al-Turkistani, the editors have deliberately chosen not to include a story about his death in the section "Our Martyrs" or anywhere else in the magazine.

Since its inaugural issue in July 2008, al-Turkistani was featured prominently in *Islamic Turkistan*. Abdullah Mansour wrote an article in the first issue, stating that al-Turkistani became the military commander of the TIP after former leader Hamad Mahsum was killed by Pakistani forces in 2003. In the same issue, al-Turkistani wrote the concluding article, "Save Turkistan before It's Too Late," warning of the threat to Islam in Xinjiang and chastising Muslims elsewhere for turning a blind eye to the region's Muslims. [1] The second, third and fourth editions of *Islamic Turkistan* contained a three article-series on al-Turkistani's life. The third article in the series, "Interview with Brother Abd al-Haq, Emir of the Turkistani Islamic Party," details al-Turkistani's life in Kabul in 2001 and his retreat into Waziristan after 9/11 and the fall of the Taliban. It is unclear why the sixth and seventh editions do not say who succeeded al-Turkistani as TIP's new leader or provide information on his death, but the TIP's inability to carry out attacks against China or U.S. forces in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region to avenge him may provide the reason for the silence on this major setback to the group.

The TIP and the Islamic World

The language and content of *Islamic Turkistan* show that the main purpose of the publication is to introduce TIP ideology to the Arabic-speaking global jihadist community and, possibly, to attract funding from the sympathizers in the ummah, al-Qaeda, or the Taliban. The publication is less about presenting the group's militant achievements and qualifications than other jihadist publications, presumably because there is no evidence that TIP has ever carried out a successful attack in China, despite TIP claims in videos released in 2008 that it had coordinated three bus bombings before the 2008 Beijing Olympics. China often blames demonstrations and violence in Xinjiang on Muslim and Uyghur "splittists" and "terrorists," but China has not offered credible evidence to justify its claims.

Paradoxically, claims of terrorism by the TIP and the Chinese government – whether true or not – can benefit both parties. The war against terrorism allows the

Chinese government to justify its heavy-handed policies to suppress Uyghur activism in Xinjiang while crediting the TIP for violence it was not responsible for enhances the TIP's jihadi resume.

A selection of articles from *Islamic Turkistan's* seventh issue gives some idea of the publication's mix of religious inspiration, jihadi ideology and ethnic nationalism:

- The editorial is called "The Heart of the Thief is Trembling" and talks about China's plans to build 30 airports in East Turkistan, claiming the expansion in air facilities is due to China's internal and external security concerns rather than to further the prosperity of the region: "The thieves of the land are afraid of their safety, therefore they plan to protect themselves." The writer predicts that China will replace America as the global superpower after America collapses, but warns the "Chinese aggressors" that the TIP will continue to wage jihad against China for the sake of the people in the region.

- "Turkistan Seeks Help...Is There a Supporter?" is based on a lecture given in Afghanistan by Shaykh Abu Mohammed al-Turkistani (Abdul Haq al-Turkistani), who reminds listeners of the importance of being prepared for fighting both spiritually and externally. Al-Haq gives an introduction to Turkistan's geography and its wealth and resources. He says (incorrectly) that Turkistan is the second biggest oil-producing region in the world. The final paragraph is about the war against Muslims in Turkistan to end the region's Islamic identity and annihilate the mujahideen. This is what he says gave rise to the emergence of the Turkistani Islamic Party in May 1988.

- "Get to know Muslims in China" focuses on the religious, ethnic and historical ties between the Muslims of East Turkistan and Kazakhs. It highlights the failure of the Chinese rule to sow discord between Uyghurs and Kazakhs despite the oppression of Muslims in Central Asia.

- "The Commandment of the Martyr Abdullah Azzam," is a reminder to all that jihad is a duty for every Muslim. "Your life is jihad...Your pride is in al-jihad...Your existence is closely linked to Jihad." The Jordanian-Palestinian

jihad ideologue and spiritual founder of al-Qaeda Abdullah Azzam recommended that Muslim scholars, women and children focus on the religious duty of Jihad.

### Profiling Martyrs

A regular feature in *Islamic Turkistan* is "Our Martyrs," which profiles TIP fighters killed in action. The most recent issue profiles the martyr Abdul Salaam. According to the article, Abdul Salaam's original name was Roz Mohammed and he was born in 1985 in the city of Lop in the state of Xotan, Xinjiang Province. He grew up with a loving, Muslim family who wanted him to become a scholar. After primary school his family took him to Pakistan on their way to the Hajj. He entered a school in Lahore where he trained in reciting the Koran, but did not finish his education after hearing the call of jihad in Afghanistan in 1999 from Abu Mohamed, leader of the TIP. Abdul Salaam then went to Kabul to study at the School of Hijra and Jihad, which was for Turkistanis. There he obtained training in weapons that were prohibited in China.

By 2001, Abdul Salaam was at a camp in Tora Bora with Arabs and fellow Turkistanis. His camp was hit by U.S. airstrikes on October 7, 2001. Some of his "brothers" were killed in that battle but he still participated in the fight against the Americans and their local allies. When the mujahideen withdrew over the border into Pakistan they were captured because a Shi'a tribe in Bujnar, Pakistan betrayed them. According to the account, the government of Pakistan sold the prisoners to the Americans, though Abdul Salaam was placed in a Pakistani prison because of his young age until he was released with the help of tribal leaders. The young jihadi then joined the TIP in Khorasan [i.e. the tribal regions of northwest Pakistan] and trained with the mujahideen there, remaining with them even when many fighters abandoned the jihad after the fall of the Taliban's Emirate of Afghanistan.

Abdul Leith (presumably Abu Laith al-Libi, d. 2008, is intended here) asked TIP leader Abdul Haq if Abdul Salaam could join him. The two then became like father and son and Abdul Leith said, "Among a couple of the trainees Abdul Salaam was young, fast in his movements, and keen in his training." Abdul Salaam joined Abdul Leith in many battles before he considered fighting against the Communists in Turkistan. He was well trained in the use of man-portable surface-to-air missiles and in 2007 invented a modification to



improve their performance. However, the second time the modified weapon was used it exploded, killing the shooter and fatally wounding Abdul Salaam, who was videotaping the launch. His wife was pregnant when he died and delivered his son two months later. The profile concluded by noting Abdul Salaam is regarded as an example for all Muslims

#### Conclusion

As a 50-plus page magazine written in Arabic with detailed color graphics and a diverse array of historical, religious, and current events articles, *Islamic Turkistan* is as sophisticated as other leading jihadi publications, such as al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's English language jihadi journal, Inspire. In some ways, the two publications are similar. They both feature martyrdom biographies, interviews with prominent jihadis, and religious justification for their jihad.

However, there are also important differences. Whereas *Inspire* is written in English for an international audience and with the intent of attracting recruits from the West, *Islamic Turkistan* is aimed neither at the West nor the Uyghur and other Turkic-language speaking Muslims it purportedly represents in Turkistan. The magazine tries to position the struggle in Xinjiang and Central Asia as part of the global jihad movement on a par with Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Unlike *Inspire*, which provides specific details on bomb-making, *Islamic Turkistan* focuses on familiarizing the readership with the struggles of Xinjiang's Muslims and the reasons for TIP's jihad against Communist China, but the publication does not provide lessons on how to carry out militant operations. As there have been no confirmed attacks in China attributed to or inspired by the TIP, the publication cannot be considered effective on an operational level.

With eight issues released between July 2008 and March 2011, the effort to produce *Islamic Turkistan* is evidently worth the time, even though the TIP has not gained traction in Xinjiang and Central Asia or become a strategic concern for the Chinese government. For now, the only benefit achieved through publication may be that it puts the TIP on the radar of funders who support insurgency movements in northwest Pakistan and builds the TIP's reputation as a legitimate international jihad movement.

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*the Pacific Forum - Center for Strategic and International Studies conference on "US-Thai-Philippine Alliance Cooperation" in Bangkok on October 24-27, 2010.*

Note:

1. Kirk Sowell, "Promoting Jihad Against China: The Turkistani Islamic Party in Arabic Jihadist Media," An Independent Report Commissioned by Sky News. August 1, 2010.