



# Terrorism Monitor

In-Depth Analysis of the War on Terror

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Pakistani protesters  
burning an American flag

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## DISSIDENT GENERAL CLAIMS YEMENI PRESIDENT MANIPULATED AL-QAEDA PRESENCE TO ENSURE HIS PERSONAL RULE

In a recent interview with a pan-Arab daily, Yemen's Major General Ali Muhsin Saleh al-Ahmar claimed that President Ali Abdullah Saleh (now receiving medical treatment in Saudi Arabia after being seriously wounded in an assassination attempt) has manipulated the al-Qaeda insurgency in Yemen to win international support for his increasingly beleaguered regime (*al-Hayat*, June 11).

News of Ali Muhsin's defection to the Yemeni opposition on March 21 took many by surprise, not least President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the General's half-brother. Before his defection to the opposition, General Ali Muhsin was commander of the Northwestern Military Region and commander of the First Armored Division. Widely viewed as one of the most important figures in Yemen's military and known for his contacts with the Islamist Islah (Reform) Party and the Muslim Brotherhood, the defection of this consummate regime insider was viewed with both hope and suspicion by various opposition members.

According to Ali Muhsin: "The fact is that the al-Qaeda organization served the objectives and aims of Ali Saleh... al-Qaeda took advantage of the state's weakness and its reluctance to act against them and curb their activities since Ali Saleh wanted to use al-Qaeda as a scarecrow for the outside parties. Everybody will realize after Salah's departure that the legend of al-Qaeda in Yemen was exaggerated. When Yemen moves to a modern civil state – when the law prevails and justice and equal citizenship are ensured, when the judiciary becomes clean and the national economy becomes firm, developed and successful – al-Qaeda will have no presence in Yemen... The terrorist groups he uses to scare Yemen



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and the outside world with are supervised by the sons of his brother and the commander of his personal guards, Tariq Muhammad Saleh, and the Deputy of the National Security Apparatus, Ammar Muhammad Saleh.”

The general went on to claim al-Qaeda elements were allowed to enter the southern town of Zanjibar without resistance on May 27 to seize weapons belonging to the police and army garrison. Nine dissident generals, including Ali Muhsin, released “Statement Number One,” in which the generals accused the President of “surrendering Abyan [Governorate] to an armed terrorist group” and called on the rest of the army to join “the peaceful popular revolution” (iloubnan.info - May 29, 2011; AFP, May 29).

Ali Muhsin has survived a number of assassination attempts and some local observers have suggested a struggle for the succession has been ongoing for some time between the general and the president and his son Ahmad Ali, head of the Republican Guard (*Yemen Tribune*, October 9, 2009). According to a Wikileaks cable from the U.S. embassy in Sana’a, President Saleh tried to have the general killed by asking Saudi Arabia to bomb a compound in northern Yemen that was actually being used by the general as a field headquarters. The Saudis sensed something was wrong with the request and failed to carry out the raid (al-Jazeera, June 5).

There are suspicions that the General’s defection was only part of a strategy to create a favorable post-Saleh environment for Ali Muhsin, possibly as the new head of the military council (al-Jazeera, June 11). Ali Muhsin himself says that, at age 70, he has no personal ambition to rule Yemen. The general says President Saleh “still heaps unjust accusations against us for no reason other than that we in the armed forces announced rejection of any orders to attack the people, because we told him ‘the people demand that you leave so depart safe and sound for there is no need to spill blood and mire Yemen into anarchy and civil war.’”

Ali Muhsin has deployed his forces to defend the compound of Vice-President Abd-Rabbu Mansur Hadi, a southerner from Abyan province who was appointed in 1994 as a symbol of north-south unity. There were reports last week that elements of the 1st Armored Division repelled two attacks against the vice-president’s house by tribesmen on June 6 (*al-Sahwah* [Sana’a], June 7). The vice-president is nominally in charge with President Saleh out of the country, but it is Saleh’s son Ahmad Ali who has moved into the presidential palace

and is viewed to have control of the government. Troops under Ali Muhsin’s command are also reported to be preparing defensive positions in Sana’a in preparation for an expected confrontation with forces still loyal to the Saleh regime (Naba News, June 7). While his troops prepare for action, Ali Muhsin was reported to have met with the U.S. and EU ambassadors in Sana’a (Ilaf.com, June 9).

#### ALGERIA SEEKS NEW RUSSIAN ATTACK HELICOPTERS FOR ITS CAMPAIGN AGAINST AL-QAEDA IN THE ISLAMIC MAGHREB

To deal with a number of new and longstanding security threats, Algeria is seeking the purchase of an unspecified number of new Russian-made Mi-28NE “Night Hunter” attack helicopters. [1] The Mi-28NE is the export version of the Mi-28N, an all-weather, day and night operable two-seat attack helicopter roughly comparable to the American-made AH-64 “Apache” attack helicopter. Besides a continuing insurgency led by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Algeria’s northeastern Kabylia mountain range, Algeria is making major efforts to secure its vast desert interior, where trans-national smugglers and AQIM gangs have made huge profits by taking advantage of the relative lack of security in the region. As well as continuing tensions with its western neighbor Morocco over the status of the Western Sahara and the presence of anti-Moroccan Polisario guerrillas in camps in southern Algeria, Algiers must now also contend with a possible spillover of the Libyan conflict into the Sahara/Sahel region.

According to a director of Russia’s Rostvertol, a state-owned manufacturer of attack helicopters, a commercial proposal has been delivered to Algeria and the company hopes a contract will soon be signed to allow for delivery of the new helicopters in the period 2012-2017 (Interfax/AVN, June 6; RIA Novosti, June 6). Algeria currently operates 36 export versions of the Mi-24 attack helicopter, an older and now largely outdated variant. The helicopters are routinely used for fire support in combined ground-air operations by Algeria’s Armée Nationale Populaire (ANP) and the Gendarmerie Nationale against AQIM guerrillas (see *Terrorism Monitor*, April 23, 2010).

The Mi-28N is primarily designed to hunt and destroy armored vehicles, but is suitable for a range of other activities, ranging from reconnaissance to engaging ground troops or even low-speed air targets.

The helicopter purchase is part of a trend in Algerian arms purchases that began in May 2010, when Algiers announced it would make drastic cuts in its arms purchases from the United States in favor of buying similar equipment from Russia. Algiers cited long delays in delivery times, pressure on U.S. arms sales to Arab nations from Israel and dramatic differences in the cost of similar arms systems between the two suppliers (*El Khabar* [Algiers], May 24, 2010; RIA Novosti, May 24, 2010).

So far, Venezuela, which is still awaiting delivery, is the only other foreign buyer of the Mi28-NE, though India has indicated interest in a possible purchase. Turkey had intended to buy 32 used Mi-28 helicopters from Russia in 2008-2009 as a stop-gap measure until deliveries of 52 Agusta Westland A-129 Mangusta (“Mongoose”) attack helicopters could begin (*Vatan*, December 22, 2008; RIA Novosti, December 22, 2008). The proposed purchase of Russian helicopters came after Washington refused to permit the sale of used American attack helicopters from U.S. Marine inventories after disputes over technology transfers prevented U.S. companies from bidding on the main Turkish order that was eventually filled by Italy’s Agusta-Westland. In time, Washington reversed itself, allowing the sale of AH-1W Super Cobra helicopters from the U.S. Marines to Turkey in late 2009, leading Ankara to cancel further talks with Russia regarding the Mi-28 purchase (*Sunday Zaman*, October 25, 2009).

Work on the Mi-28 began in the 1980s, but was reduced to a low priority after the Soviet Air Force chose to go with the Kamov Ka-50 “Black Shark” as its new attack helicopter. Work resumed in earnest in the mid-1990s with the debut of the Mi-28N night-capable helicopter, though development was again delayed until 2003-2004, when the Russian Air Force announced the Mi-28N would be Russia’s standard attack helicopter of the future.

Though it is a dedicated attack helicopter without a secondary transport role, the Mi-28N has a small cabin capable of carrying three additional individuals. In Russia this is used mainly for rescuing downed helicopter crews, but it is possible Algeria could use this capability to deploy small numbers of Special Forces operatives.

The Mi-28N has considerable firepower, including:

- 16 Ataka-V anti-tank guided missiles in combination with either ten unguided S-13 rockets or 40 S-8 rockets (shorter range but

greater numbers). The Ataka is available in high-explosive or thermobaric variants for different missions.

- Eight Igla-V or Vympel R-73 air-to-air missiles with infrared homing warheads.
- Two KMGU-2 mine dispensers.
- A 30mm Shipunov turret-mounted cannon equipped with 250 rounds.

The aircraft’s normal range is 270 miles with a cruising speed of 168 m.p.h. and a maximum speed of 199 m.p.h. Optional fuel tanks can be mounted under the stub wings, allowing for extra range in the open spaces of the Algerian interior. The helicopter is also equipped with passive protection systems to aid the survival of downed helicopter crews.

Note:

1. The NATO reporting name is “Havoc.”

## Shiite Militancy Makes Inroads in Sunni Gaza

By Eldad Nissan

Recent years have witnessed an increase in Iranian activity in the Middle East, especially in Lebanon and Gaza. These activities have had military, political, economic, and religious effects in the region. This article will present the Gaza Strip as an example of Shiite Iran's increased religious influence in the area. Though Gaza's population is over 99% Sunni Muslim and tends to be generally hostile to Shiites, Iran's missionary activity presents a challenge to the Hamas government.

The 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah marked a turning point in the attitudes of Sunni Muslims in Gaza toward Shiites. Many people expressed admiration of Hezbollah and its Secretary General, Hassan Nasrallah. The Hezbollah leader's political legitimacy grew in the Arab world, with many Sunnis preferring to ignore the fact he is a Shiite cleric. Over time, this admiration led a number of people to convert to Shi'ism despite the disapproval of Sunni schools of jurisprudence. Moreover, some converts began to display their Shi'ism proudly.

Feelings of pride in a long-awaited Arab victory over Israel were mixed with an uncertain attitude toward the Shi'a fighters who had achieved it. In Egypt there were reports of preachers being assaulted after praying for Hezbollah and describing their victory as "a triumph for all Muslims," while some Egyptian publications warned of the "real danger" that Egypt and other Sunni countries might experience mass conversions to Shi'ism (al-Ahram Weekly, October 19-25, 2006).

The phenomenon of Iranian penetration into the Gaza Strip began in the 1980s when Dr. Fathi Shaqaqi established the Islamic Jihad Organization in Palestine (IJOP - Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami fi Filastin). A pro-Iranian orientation became the hallmark of the IJOP, which is thought to receive the majority of its funding from Iran. The financial aid comes in the form of "charities" operating in the Gaza Strip such as al-Ahsan and the Fathi Shaqaqi Forum. [1]

The main role of such organizations is to secretly transfer money, organize festivals to mark the Iranian revolution, distribute food, provide scholarships to

study in Iran and transport the wounded for treatment in Iran via Jordan. Although none of these groups talk openly about converting Palestinians to Shi'ism, this is actually one of their main purposes.

The phenomenon began in the early 1980s with the infiltration of Iranian influence into the Gaza Strip and West Bank. At first, the number of people who converted to Shiism was negligible. But after the Hezbollah-Israel war of 2006, the phenomenon began to expand as hundreds of Palestinians proudly announced their conversion to Shiism. These converts engage in a variety of activities, such as establishing a political movement, setting up websites and building Hussainia, an activity completely contrary to the Sunni faith as normally practiced in Gaza. [2]

A senior Hamas official, Dr. Khalil al-Hayya, has acknowledged Iran's "political and material support" for Hamas, but added that the movement welcomes support of "the resistance of our people from any party, one the one condition that such support does not have any political price. We do not accept any interference in our politics" (al-Qassam, January 23, 2010).

Despite its Sunni orientation, the Hamas government in Gaza is getting support from Iran in the form of funding and weapons. [3] Consequently, the government finds itself in a very serious conflict concerning these converts and their activities in Gaza. On the one hand, if Hamas plays a strong hand against Sunni converts to Shiism and their activities, Iran will consider such a position as anti-Iranian. On the other hand, if Hamas does nothing, it risks contradicting its customary interpretation of Sunni Islam with the danger it might provoke harsh reactions from conservative Sunni countries.

Therefore, Hamas is trying to deal with the problem in a discreet way. Ahmed Yousef, political adviser to Gaza's Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, recently said that there are no Shiites in Gaza, but only a sense of empathy and solidarity with Iran and Hezbollah (AFP, April 6).

Under the surface, however, Hamas is trying to fight this phenomenon by closing organizations suspected to be Shiite centers and arresting people suspected of preaching in favor of conversion to Shiism. In early April a Hamas security unit entered the office of the al-Baqiyat al-Salihah Islamic Society in North Gaza, ordered the staff out and shut it down. The security team then did the same to the Fathi Shaqaqi Forum office (alaahd.com, April 7; Mezan.org, April 7).

Years of charitable activities in Gaza supported by Iran have led indirectly to sympathy for the Shiite concept and identification with Hezbollah and the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution (Revolutionary Guards). This penetration has had a strong effect on the Palestinian population in Gaza. Although conversion to Shiism is not occurring in large numbers, this phenomenon concerns many Sunni Muslims around the world at a time when Sunni-Shiite tensions are on the rise, and is particularly troubling to the Hamas government, which cannot “bite the hand that feeds it”.

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Notes:

1. <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/js2426.aspx>
2. A Hussainia is a congregation hall for Shiite ritual ceremonies, especially those associated with the Remembrance of Muharram.
3. U.S. Department of State: Country Reports on Terrorism 2008, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122436.htm>

## Insurgents Intensify Attacks in Iraq as U.S. Prepares Military Withdrawal

*By Ramzy Mardini*

Three mortars were fired at an American base in eastern Baghdad on June 6, killing five U.S. soldiers. The incident represented the single most deadly attack on U.S. forces since 2009. A week later, two additional U.S. soldiers were killed in southern Iraq. In recent months, attacks against U.S. and Iraqi security personnel have begun to follow a systematic and worrisome trend. This comes against the backdrop of uncertainty regarding the U.S. military's presence beyond 2011, as insurgents work to revive their activities to exploit the volatile political environment plaguing Iraq and the region.

Several factors have contributed to Iraq's noticeably deteriorating security environment in recent months:

- The uncertainty surrounding the U.S. military's withdrawal by this year's end.
- An Iraqi government made increasingly fragile by ongoing disagreements between the major political blocs.
- The “Arab Spring” upheavals intensifying the Iraqi population's dissatisfaction and frustration with its government.
- A possible revival of Iran's efforts to exert influence in Iraq on the backdrop of regional uncertainty and the possibility of an extended American presence.

In adherence to the bilateral Status-of-Forces Agreement (SOFA) signed in December 2008, the U.S. military is scheduled to completely withdraw from Iraq no later than December 31, 2011. But as Iraq's leaders contemplate whether or not to extend the U.S. presence beyond this year, various insurgent groups have ratcheted up their attacks against the remaining 45,000 American troops in order to claim credit for driving out U.S. forces.

Uncertain of the perpetrator of the June 6 attack on the American base in Baghdad, a senior Iraqi counterterrorism official remarked, “There are many

different groups behind attacks against Americans at this stage, and we cannot distinguish which is the main group” (AFP, June 7). His comments highlighted the renewed effort by all insurgents to take credit for ousting the U.S. military. Three days later, Kata’ib Hezbollah (KH), an Iranian-backed Shi’a militia the U.S. State Department believes has ties to Lebanese Hezbollah, claimed responsibility for the operation. “We promise them that they will not be safe,” the group warned in a statement, “and our weapons will reach them” (AFP, June 10; Reuters, July 13, 2010). The U.S. military has pointed to an increase in anti-American activity in an effort “to garner prestige” by KH militants and other Shi’a militias trained by Iran, such as Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH – “League of the Righteous”) and the Liwa al-Youm al-Mawud (LYM – “Promised Day Brigades”) (CNN, June 12). The frequency of insurgent attacks in the southern Shi’a provinces has grown markedly in recent months, even doubling in some areas.

Last December, Iraq’s bickering parties forged a power-sharing agreement that finally ended a nine-month political stalemate. The multi-party settlement was based on an all-inclusive “national partnership,” in which all of Iraq’s major political blocs were incorporated into a Maliki-led government. Despite his bloc’s second-place finish in the March 2010 parliamentary elections, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki was able to retain his position largely due to Iranian sponsorship and the backing of firebrand Shi’a cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. With 40 seats in the 325-seat parliament, al-Sadr is armed with Iraq’s largest and most cohesive individual political party.

Despite such support, al-Maliki’s rule has become increasingly fragile in recent months, as ongoing disagreements amongst political actors have paralyzed governance. The premier’s Dawlat al-Qanoon (“State of Law”) coalition, the Sadrist, and former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi’s Iraqiyya bloc have failed to form a consensus on appointing interior and defense ministers. As of this moment, al-Maliki is serving as the de-facto head of each ministry, as Iraqi politicians blame one another for causing the ongoing disputes and deterioration in security. Maliki has even gone far enough to accuse “political parties” and “their security guards” of orchestrating some of the political assassinations plaguing the government (al-Arab Online, April 26).

Throughout the country, popular demonstrations demanding basic services, political rights, and effective governance have become politicized. Sunni and Shi’a figures are working to capitalize on the population’s

frustration by focusing their rhetoric against their political rivals and the U.S. military’s occupation. On April 9, tens of thousands of Sadr loyalists from across Iraq flooded the streets in Baghdad to mark the eighth anniversary of the fall of Saddam Hussein (*Awsat al-Iraq*, April 9). During the rally, Sadrist spokesman Sheikh Salah al-Obaidi announced that in the event U.S. forces remain in Iraq past this year, al-Sadr would escalate “peaceful and popular opposition,” followed by “escalating military opposition” against the United States by fully reinstating the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JaM) militia (AK News, April 9).

Leaders of the AAH, a 2004 spin-off from the JaM, have reportedly stated they would consider rejoining Sadr’s movement if JaM is armed and the self-imposed freeze on its activities is lifted (*al-Hayat*, April 11). As the withdrawal debate entered Iraq’s political mainstream in April, the U.S. military suffered eleven fatalities, the highest monthly death toll since June 2009, when U.S. combat forces were visibly patrolling urban neighborhoods and cities. There were 162 attacks targeting U.S. forces in April, up from 128 in March, and 93 in February.

In May, a wave of bombings targeted Iraq’s security forces, causing hundreds of deaths and injuries. This trend was seen as an insurgent effort to undermine the fragile government’s credibility in the eyes of an increasingly frustrated population. In early May, a suicide bomber drove his car into the police headquarters in the mainly Shi’a city of Hilla (Reuters, May 5). The attack killed more than 20 Iraqis, along with 80 others injured – all policemen. On May 19, twin bombings targeted the security establishment in the ethnically disputed city of Kirkuk, resulting in 30 dead, and 90 others injured. Most of the casualties were Iraqi police and security personnel. Kirkuk police immediately accused al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) as the culprit (*Aswat al-Iraq*, May 19). Though AQI still maintains sufficient operational capacity in exploiting security gaps in northern Iraq, other prominent militant groups, such as the ex-Ba’athist Naqshbandi organization and Ansar al-Islam, also operate in the area. Most recently, five people were killed on June 12 when a suicide bomber drove his car into a Basra police headquarters in southern Iraq (*Aswat al-Iraq*, June 13; al-Jazeera, June 13).

Covert assassination operations have now become the biggest concern confronting Iraq’s current security apparatus. After losing territorial footing and critical resources since the 2007-08 counterinsurgency

campaign, insurgents have adapted by relying on firearms with silencers and so-called “sticky bombs” that attach explosives to a target’s vehicle. These tactics have led to the deaths of hundreds of political, security, and tribal figures this year. While AQI has acknowledged many attacks involving these tactics, some Iraqi security officials believe that Shi’a militias trained by Iran are carrying out many of these assassination operations. For example, most of the senior officials from the defense ministry who were targeted in recent months were Sunni Arabs. Some Iraqi security officials have reported receiving threatening telephone calls, while Shi’a militias issue supposed hit lists on their websites. According to a Defense Ministry official: “Officers are living in fear. These groups have people everywhere, in the police, in the investigations departments... The dangerous thing is that the officers’ addresses are being leaked by security officials” (Reuters, May 16).

Iraq’s political uncertainty and the concentration of insurgent attacks against the U.S. military and government and security officials have complicated negotiations in extending the U.S. presence beyond 2011. As talks for renegotiating the security agreement with the United States intensify in the coming critical months, this summer is likely to be one of the deadliest in Iraq in recent years.

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## Contradictions in Pakistan’s Counterterrorism Strategy Leading to Security Collapse

*By Arif Jamal*

Few in Pakistan doubt that the United States and Pakistan are headed for a total divorce, at least on the question of Pakistan’s counterterrorism strategy in the near future. A strongly-worded press release issued by the Pakistani military’s Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR) after the 139th Corps Commanders Conference on June 9 seems to have finally sealed the fate of the deteriorating Pakistan-U.S. relations on the question of how to carry out the war on terror in the future. [1] If the ISPR press release is any guide, the Corps Commanders’ Conference devoted most of its time to Pakistani-U.S. relations and domestic issues arising out of Pakistan’s relations with the United States and its conduct of war on terror. A much smaller passage focused on the sacrifices the Pakistani armed forces have made in the war on terror.

Most importantly, the Corps Commanders Conference decided to stop accepting financial assistance from the United States in the future. Announcing this politely but in no ambiguous way, the ISPR statement asked the Pakistani government to divert “the U.S. funds meant for military assistance to [the] Army to economic aid to Pakistan, which can be used for reducing the burden on the common man.” The statement seems to be politically motivated as U.S. military assistance may not be converted into civilian aid. The ISPR statement also made a controversial claim about the Coalition Support Funds (CSF) that is likely to raise controversy in the coming days. The CSF was created after 9/11 to compensate certain U.S. allies for their assistance in waging the War on Terrorism. Rising demands from Pakistan for greater CSF payments have created problems since 2008.

The statement claimed the United States had provided only a total of \$8.6 billion to Pakistan, of which the Army received only \$1.4 billion while the Pakistan Navy and the Pakistan Air Force received still less. The total amount of CSF received was far less than the expected \$13 billion. The Pakistan government had used approximately \$6 billion of the amount received for budgetary support. Moreover, the statement denied that the Pakistani military had ever received any training assistance from the United States, “except for training

on the newly inducted weapons and some training assistance for the Frontier Corps.” This seems to be a questionable claim as a number of officers from the Pakistani military, including Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani, have studied in the United States military schools.

The Corps Commanders Conference also decided to limit intelligence sharing with the United States and “share intelligence strictly on the basis of reciprocity and complete transparency.” This appeared to refer to the killing of Osama bin Laden in the garrison city of Abbottabad on May 2, an incident in which the Pakistani military was caught unaware. In very clear terms, the Corps Commanders Conference came out in opposition to the U.S. drone attacks in northwest Pakistan. The ISPR statement said, “[The] Army has repeatedly conveyed to all concerned that these [drone attacks] are not acceptable under any circumstances. There is no room for ambiguity in this regard. [The] Government is making necessary efforts in this direction.” At the same time, the military commanders made it clear that there would be no military operation in the North Waziristan Agency in the near future. Meetings between CIA chief Leon Panetta and General Kayani and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief Lieutenant General Ahmad Shuja Pasha the day after the conference failed to bridge the widening gulf between the United States and the Pakistani military. The CIA chief was visibly given the cold shoulder during his visit, as there were no customary courtesy calls from President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani (*Dawn* [Karachi] June 12).

### Pakistan - A Reluctant Partner in the Global War on Terror

Pakistan was a reluctant partner in the U.S.-led war on terror from the very beginning. Between October 12, 1999 and September 11, 2001, the regime of General Pervez Musharraf (1999-2007) had given unprecedented freedom to jihadi groups in Pakistan. The regime had to change its tactics in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks as India openly offered the United States all possible help to carry out strikes on al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Justifying his decision to join the U.S.-led coalition in his address to the nation on September 19, 2001, General Musharraf said that by doing so, he was safeguarding Pakistan’s four key interests; the security of the country, the revival of the national economy, control of Pakistan’s strategic nuclear and missile assets, and the Kashmir cause. [2]

The Pakistani army had had no experience with counterterrorism or even a sense of counterterrorism strategy until it joined the U.S.-led war on terror in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. However, Pakistan had wide experience in fomenting insurgencies. It had been doing just that in the Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir region from the very beginning of the dispute over this region began in 1947. [3] In 1980, with the help of a number of other countries, it started fomenting another huge insurgency in Afghanistan. [4] Joining the U.S.-led coalition was a tough decision for the Pakistani military, and it did so only under unbearable pressure from the Western world. However, the Pakistani army played a double game and selectively targeted the terrorists. It did help the Americans to nab some al-Qaeda militants but at the same time it helped save the Afghan Taliban and several other militant groups. Jihadi groups operating in Kashmir were allowed to operate relatively openly although the Army command curbed their infiltration into Indian-controlled Kashmir. It was around 2005-2006 when the West started becoming aware of the double game the Pakistani army was playing and started asking Pakistan to take more concrete action against terrorism.

### Pakistan Starts Reversing Its Counterterrorist Strategy

Pakistani-American relations started deteriorating in the latter half of the 2000s. By the end of 2010, bilateral relations had nose-dived and it had become clear that the Pakistan army was reversing its counterterrorism strategy. The most important aspect of the new strategy was the distancing of the Pakistan Army from American strategy. One way of demonstrating this distance was withdrawing its support to the CIA-operated drone campaign, which was taking out terrorists in the tribal zone of Pakistan. On December 13, Kareem Khan, a resident of Mir Ali, North Waziristan, asked the Islamabad police to register a case against Jonathan Banks, the Islamabad CIA station chief, for running a “clandestine spying operation” in Pakistan. Kareem Khan had lost his brother and a son in a drone attack nearly a year ago (*The News* [Islamabad], December 14, 2010).

The CIA official had to immediately leave the country as his life was in danger after his cover was blown. It was widely believed that the Pakistani military had passed the name of the CIA officer to the complainant. Kareem Khan also led several sit-ins in Islamabad to stop the drone attacks, which were attended by other residents of the tribal areas (*Dawn*, December 14, 2010). The



Pakistani press intensified the well-planned campaign against the drone attacks and fighting what it described as “America’s war”. Islamist leaders and ex-servicemen were at the forefront of this anti-U.S. campaign.

Pakistani-American relations further deteriorated when another CIA employee, Raymond Davis, killed two young men on January 27 in Lahore (*Express News* [Karachi] January 28). The two were apparently working for the ISI and found the CIA operative’s activities “detrimental to our national security,” according to a Pakistani defense official (*Express Tribune* [Karachi], February 7).

The Pakistani media and Islamists intensified their anti-U.S. campaign and demanded a break in relations with the United States. When Davis was released in an apparent deal between the ISI and the CIA, the Pakistani military had to face unprecedented criticism from the same press and Islamists who were previously supporting the Pakistani army (*The News* [Islamabad], March 17; *Dawn* [Karachi], March 18). Although the military managed to control the criticism, the image of the Army and the ISI had suffered beyond repair. To repair its image, the military continuously stressed that it was downgrading its links with the United States. It publicly asked for and received a reduction in the number of CIA staff stationed in Pakistan (*Dawn*, April 12). As the two countries struggled to repair their relations and restore Pakistani cooperation with the United States in counterterrorism efforts, Pakistan was caught off guard when the Americans killed and removed Bin Laden from a mansion in the garrison city of Abbottabad on May 1 (*Express Tribune* May 2). This proved to be last nail in the coffin of Pakistan-U.S. counterterrorism cooperation.

## Conclusion

It seemed that Pakistan-U.S. relations were starting to normalize in the wake of Senator John Kerry’s visit to Islamabad in the third week of May. Despite some continuing irritants, Pakistan seemed ready to pursue a counterterrorism strategy with American help.

It was commonly believed that Pakistan’s demand to reduce the number of U.S. military trainers in Pakistan was more symbolic than real, but on May 8, a day before the Corps Commanders Conference, the military announced that it had “expelled” 90 out of 135 U.S. military trainers in Pakistan (*Daily Times* [Lahore] May 9). The decisions made at the Corps Commanders

Conference have brought Pakistani-American cooperation on counterterrorism to its lowest point in nearly a decade. It seems unlikely these relations can be repaired in the near future.

The inherent contradictions in Pakistan’s counterinsurgency strategy have finally taken their toll. Pakistan’s military doctrines are highly India-centric and are based primarily on fomenting insurgencies. It was for these reasons that, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, Pakistan decided to join the U.S.-led coalition. Pakistan feared at that time that India’s alliance with the United States would be harmful for Pakistan’s long term military strategy, but the nation could keep the United States from greater cooperation with India by joining the U.S.-led coalition. However, the utility of this unnatural alliance has worn thin with the passage of time. A large part of the Army’s jihadist assets have spun out of the ISI’s control and are now attacking the armed forces themselves. Assaults on military facilities such as the October 10, 2009 attack on the Army General Headquarters in Rawalpindi and the recent May 23 attack on the Mehran naval base in Karachi clearly pose a significant threat to the armed forces as well as the country.

After near nearly a decade of counterterrorism cooperation, Pakistan’s army has again faced a dilemma in choosing its strategic course. In the words of a senior Pakistani official, the Army “has chosen the old path of using jihad as an instrument of its defense policy against its enemies. The Pakistani army thinks that this is the only way to neutralize the Islamist extremists who are targeting the Pakistan army and stop more jihadists from spinning out of its control.” [5]

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## Notes:

1. Available at: [http://ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press\\_release&cid=1763#pr\\_](http://ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&cid=1763#pr_).
2. General Pervez Musharraf’s address is available at: <http://web.archive.org/web/20080511213354/http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/pakistanpresident.htm>.
3. For a detailed account of Pakistan’s strategy of fomenting insurgency in Indian-controlled Kashmir, see Arif Jamal, *Shadow War – The Untold Story of Jihad in Kashmir*, Melville House, New York, May 2009.

4. For a detailed account of Pakistan's strategy of fomenting insurgency in Afghanistan, see Mohammed Yousaf and Mark Adkin, *The Bear Trap: Afghanistan's Untold Story*, L. Cooper, London, 1992. See also John K Cooley, *Unholy Wars –Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism*, Pluto Press, London, 1999.
5. Author's interview with a senior Pakistani official who requested anonymity, June 2011.