



Terrorism Monitor

In-Depth Analysis of the War on Terror

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Aftermath of attack on Pakistani border village

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HUNDREDS OF EGYPTIAN POLICE DISMISSED AS TROOPS RIOT IN ALEXANDRIA

As protesters return to the streets of Cairo and other Egyptian cities to try to force an acceleration in the pace of post-revolutionary political reform, Egypt's Interior Ministry has dismissed 669 police officers, including many senior officials, as part of an effort to reform a police force that has come to be associated with torture, extrajudicial activities and a culture of impunity

The July 13 announcement by recently appointed Interior Minister Mansur al-Essawy came as demonstrators continue to demand justice for the deaths of nearly 900 protesters in the January 25 popular uprising. The Minister assured viewers on state TV that 37 of the dismissed officers would face charges related to the killings (Ittihad al-Idha'ah wa'l-Tilifzyun al-Misri [Egyptian Radio and Television Union – ERTU], July 13). [1]

Former Finance Minister Yusuf Boutros Ghali, who reportedly has dual Egyptian-American citizenship, has apparently fled Egyptian corruption charges by fleeing to New York via the UK after the U.S. ambassador to the UK interceded repeatedly to prevent his arrest and deportation to Egypt (Youm7.com, July 18; *Bikya Masr*, July 18). Several other ministers have received acquittals on corruption charges, angering many Egyptians.

In the current tense environment, it takes little to spark major incidents. On July 17, a soldier of the Alexandria garrison was struck by a superior officer for refusing to go on night duty. A rumor spread quickly that the soldier had been beaten to death, followed by angry soldiers taking to the streets, burning their mattresses and vehicles before gathering to clash with their officers. Security



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officials defused the situation by convincing the troops that their colleague was alive and receiving medical treatment. According to the official medical report, the soldier had fainted after suffering an epileptic fit, though the officer involved was suspended pending investigation (*Bikya Masr*, July 18; Ahram Online, July 18).

While most eyes were focused on the events in Cairo's Tahrir square during the late January revolution, some of the worst police violence occurred in Suez, where 29 people were killed and nearly 1,000 others injured in the early days of the uprising. Though seven police officers, including the former police directorate chief, were charged in connection with the shooting of peaceful demonstrators, their release on bail on July 4 initiated a new series of angry demonstrations in the city's al-Arbaein square that quickly spread to Port Tawfik. With the trial adjourned until September, local residents will commence a symbolic "peoples' trial" of the officers in al-Arbaein square. Presiding over the trial will be the deputy head of the Court of Cassation, Mahmoud al-Khodairy, a well-known critic of the Mubarak regime (*Daily News Egypt*, July 17).

Many police officers have never returned to work after the revolution, some fearing retribution from an angry public. Some other members of the security forces, however, appear to still have faith in the pre-revolutionary culture of immunity. On July 15, some members of the military police attempted to bypass a queue for fuel at a filling station in Qalyubiya Governorate. They were told to return to the end of the queue, but instead returned several hours later and abducted the staff, taking them to a military post where they were stripped and beaten all night (*al-Masry al-Youm*, July 18). Similar cases of police abuses continue to be reported across Egypt.

Note:

For the internal collapse of the Interior Ministry, see "Egypt's Internal Security Service Collapses in a Storm of Charges and Revelations," *Terrorism Monitor*, April 7, 2011.

BURKINA FASO CARRIES OUT MASS ARRESTS OF MILITARY MUTINEERS

In the wake of months of violent rioting by Burkina Faso's military, police and civilians, the leaders of the West African nation's military have announced the dismissal of 556 soldiers, 217 of whom will face charges (*L'Observateur Paalga* [Ouagadougou], July

14; *LeFaso.net*, July 15). The move was announced at a press conference held by the Chief of General Staff of the Forces armées nationales (FAN), Brigadier General Naber Traoré and Brigadier General Diendéré Gilbert (*FasoZine* [Ouagadougou], July 14).

The Burkinabé armed forces have received extensive military assistance and training from the United States in recent years. Many officers have gone to the United States for additional training and the army is an important element in the U.S.-backed Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) (see *Terrorism Monitor* Brief, June 4, 2010).

President Blaise Compaoré has angered many in the country by announcing his intention to run for yet another term in 2015 in defiance of Article 37 of the Burkinabé constitution, which forbids a president from seeking more than two terms (*L'Observateur Paalga* [Ouagadougou], July 7). Compaoré came to power in a 1987 coup that saw the murder of his predecessor, the charismatic Captain Thomas Sankara, who had himself taken power in a 1983 Libyan supported coup organized by Compaoré. Compaoré initially ruled alongside two long term allies and fellow Marxists, Captain Henri Zongo and Major Jean-Baptiste Boukary Lingani, but in 1989 he abandoned Marxism and had both men arrested, quickly tried and executed on charges of trying to overthrow the government. Since then he has been re-elected four times in disputed elections that saw him win vast majorities. Observers have cited the "Burkinabé Paradox," referring to the nation's steady economic growth over the past five years and the complete lack of impact this has had on the country's stifling poverty (*Jeune Afrique*, June 26). Wealth distribution remains largely limited to the small national elite tied to President Compaoré.

The military protests occurring across Burkina Faso typically consist of troops taking to the streets, firing randomly or into the air, pillaging shops and destroying property. Incidents of rape have also been reported. Their grievances usually consist of demands for better pay, an end to cronyism and political bias in promotions and an end to corruption in the officer corps, which the troops say fails to represent their interests (*L'Observateur Paalga* [Ouagadougou], July 7).

Civilian unrest began in the town of Koudougou (100 km west of Ouagadougou) on February 22, with demonstrators protesting the high cost of living and the culture of impunity and use of torture in the police

that allegedly led to the death of a student in detention. The protests were received by tear gas and bullets and after two days of violence, six people were dead and the protests began to spread to other cities where police stations were burned and businesses looted (AFP, April 22). Strikes have spread to various economic sectors, including gold mines and the all-important cotton industry.

The military unrest began in late March when soldiers forcibly freed some colleagues from a prison in Fada N’Gourma who had been arrested for rape and other sex crimes (AFP, April 7).

On April 14 and 15, members of the Régiment de sécurité présidentielle (RSP - Presidential Guard) rioted until they received overdue wages and housing and food allowances they had been promised. During their rampage they looted the capital, stole cars and motorcycles and committed numerous acts of rape (AFP, April 20). The president fled the capital to his home town of Ziniaré. Army chief General Dominique Djindjéré, whose home was burned down by rioting RSP members, was replaced by Brigadier Honoré Naber Traoré on April 15 as part of sweeping changes in the military and police leadership (AFP, April 15). From Ouagadougou the unrest spread to the cities of Po, Tengkodogo and Kaya, where troops torched the home of a regimental commander and looted the home of the regional military chief (AFP, April 18).

On April 17, soldiers from the Po garrison near the Ghana border took over the town, looting, stealing vehicles and firing into the air in a three day rampage that also included a number of cases of rape (AFP, April 17).

Newly-appointed Prime Minister Luc Adolphe Tiao committed to subsidizing some essential goods and compensating victims of military and police mutinies in late April. Tiao, a journalist and former ambassador with no experience in governance, appointed a new cabinet in mid-April, but the 15 new ministers were all closely tied to the President (AFP, April 22). Compaoré himself became the new Defense Minister. All regional governors in Burkina Faso were later replaced on June 8, though three governors were simply transferred to different regions. Another three are active soldiers in the Burkinabé military (AFP, June 9).

On April 27 and 28, police officers in Ouagadougou defied a curfew and took to the streets, firing their

weapons into the air to demand better pay and working conditions. Gunfire was also reported in Bobo Dioulasso (Burkina Faso’s second largest city), Dedougou, Gaoua and Banfora (Xinhua, April 28). Police agreed to end country-wide protests following two days of negotiations with the government. Large numbers of students gathered on April 20 to protest the police mutiny by setting fire to a police station, but were met with live fire from the police (AFP, April 29). Soon after the police mutinies, national police chief Rasmane Ouangraoua was sacked and replaced by the former police commissioner in Ouagadougou (AFP, May 5).

National Gendarmerie officers from Camp Paspanga in Ouagadougou spent the night of May 23 firing their weapons into the air to demand bonuses similar to those granted to the Presidential Guard. Just as they returned to barracks in the morning, students took to the streets as part of a nation-wide protest in support of striking professors. At the same time, protesters in Koudougou burned down the mayor’s house to protest the closure of 40 businesses that had failed to pay taxes (AFP, April 28).

The looting and random gunfire of riotous troops that persisted throughout the night of June 2 in Bobo Dioulasso was followed the next day by tradesmen and businessmen attacking the city hall, customs office and several other government buildings. The city’s mayor, Salia Sanou, did not find their reaction surprising: “They have had enough. I understand them. We promised to compensate them yesterday [for an earlier episode of military looting]. They kept their calm and now they get looted again” (AFP, June 2).

On June 3, the once-more loyal Presidential Guard teamed up with a unit of para-commandos and local police to put down the Bobo Dioulasso mutiny. Six mutineers were killed (as well as a teenage girl caught in the crossfire) and 57 arrested. The use of force was authorized after state intelligence informed the president the looting mutineers were being joined by former soldiers, men from other camps and even some who had nothing to do with the military (*Jeune Afrique*, June 26).

The breakdown in security and military discipline in Burkina Faso is especially worrisome in a region where elements of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb have been highly active in recent months.

Militants Striking Both Sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border to Disrupt Security Cooperation

By Zia Ur Rehman

Eleven cross-border incursions over the last four months in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region have taken place despite several army operations in Pakistan and the NATO presence across the border in Afghanistan, demonstrating the continued strength of militants in the border region. The incursions, allegedly carried out by Pakistani militants with help from Afghan allies, have killed 56 people, including security personnel and members of anti-Taliban militias (*The News* [Islamabad], July 9). Most of the attacks were carried out in Dir region where militants of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) who had dispersed and fled to Afghanistan and adjacent tribal areas during military operations are regrouping and trying to regain a foothold in the region (see *Terrorism Monitor*, March 3). Other incursions have occurred in Chitral, Bajaur Agency, Momand Agency and South Waziristan Agency.

An account of the largest of these cross border attacks depicts militant groups operating with greater frequency while facing only minimal interference in the frontier region:

- On April 22, a border security post in the Lower Dir village of Kharkhai came under attack by militants, resulting in the death of more than 16 security personnel (*Daily Azadi*, April 29).
- On June 1, the deadliest of the cross border raids was carried out in Upper Dir's Shaltalo village, where hundreds of heavily armed militants targeted a poorly defended security post. They killed 34 people, 26 of them security officials, and captured 16 policemen (*Express Tribune* [Karachi], June 3). On July 18 the Afghan Taliban released a video showing the bound policemen being executed somewhere inside Afghanistan, allegedly as retribution for the death of six Pakistani children killed during security operations in Swat district (*Daily Azadi* [Swat], July 19; BBC Urdu, July 19; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ro4sGGRuWms>).

- On June 6, over 200 militants crossed the border and raided the homes of local anti-Taliban militia members in the Mamond area of Bajaur, killing roughly 15 people (*Daily Azadi* [Swat], June 7).

- The latest of the cross-border attacks was launched in the Nusrat Darra area of Upper Dir on July 6. A member of the local anti-Taliban militia was killed, several others injured and three schools destroyed during the attack (*The News*, July 9). [1]

Residents of Pakistan's border areas are now requesting the government not install additional security posts in their areas for fear of inciting new attacks while migrations have started abruptly from the border villages. [2]

Although the Pakistani government blamed the Afghan Taliban for carrying out the cross-border attacks, local security analysts and tribal elders say that the attacks were carried out in Dir region and other tribal areas by Pakistani militants, especially accomplices of Maulana Fazlullah and Maulana Faqir Muhammad, the heads of the TTP in Swat and Bajaur region respectively, with the help of Afghan militants. [3] Media reports claimed that Fazlullah and several high-profile TTP commanders had fled to the Nuristan or Kunar provinces of Afghanistan due to military operations in Swat in 2009. However, it is possible Fazlullah's group members have started returning and are now targeting their enemies, especially the security forces. This was seemingly confirmed by TTP leaders when they claimed responsibility for the attacks in Dir region. Omar Hassan Ahrabi, a spokesperson for the TTP Malakand Division, said that his organization had carried out the attack "with Afghan allies" (*Pak Tribune*, July 7). However, Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Afghan Taliban, denied involvement in the attack on Pakistani territory, describing it as an internal matter for Pakistan. He further stressed that the Afghan Taliban insurgents limit their operations to Afghanistan and never launch attacks in Pakistan or any other country (*The News* [Islamabad] July 12).

Current attacks in Dir and adjacent tribal areas might also indicate that Pakistani militants are not only regrouping in these areas, but also adopting a new strategy of large-scale attacks on government targets and security forces. TTP Bajaur leader Faqir Muhammad says their forces have joined with al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban in

changing their strategy to focus on large-scale attacks on state targets and security agencies, such as Dir attacks (*The News*, June 3).

The recent cross-border attacks may be precursors of a battle between the security forces and the Taliban for the social and administrative control of Malakand division and the Bajaur and Mohmand Agencies after high-profile militants were targeted by CIA Predator drones in FATA. One Peshawar-based security analyst suggested that the alliance between the leadership of al-Qaeda, the Afghan Taliban, the Pakistani Taliban and other national and transnational militant organizations might be looking for a new but familiar safe haven in the shape of Malakand division prior to starting a military offensive in North Waziristan. [4] Local elders believe the Taliban's combination of targeted attacks on security forces and indiscriminate assaults on civilians seem designed to create fear amongst the local population so that they do not create armed militias to defend their territory. [5]

Reports from Afghanistan suggest that the cross-border attacks run both ways, especially in the remote regions of eastern Afghanistan. Afghan authorities, including the governors of Kunar and Nuristan, complain regularly about the incursion of militants from Pakistan, especially from the areas of Dir, Chitral and Bajaur. The largest attack took place in Kamdish district in Nuristan, where hundreds of militants, most of them alleged to be Pakistanis, crossed the border from Dir in Pakistan and targeted the district, killing scores of people, including 23 policemen (Pajhwok Afghan News, July 5). Afghan officials also claim that 760 rockets have been fired by Pakistani security forces into eastern Afghan border provinces of Kunar, Nangahar and Khost in the past six weeks, killing at least 60 people and wounding hundreds more (Wakht News Agency [Kabul], June 24). In the past three months, up to 12,000 civilians in eastern Afghanistan have been displaced by increasingly regular shelling from the Pakistan side of the border.

The attacks on both sides of the border appear to be intended to disrupt the relationship between the two countries and create mistrust at the highest levels. [6] If this is the case, the strategy seems to be a success; instead of tackling the issue of cross-border incursions directly or cooperatively, both countries are busy lodging official protests against each other, both accusing their neighbor of being responsible for harboring militant groups operating along the border. Pakistani army officials

have also said that NATO forces were failing to crack down on militants seeking shelter on the Afghan side of border.

The recent cross-border incursions on both sides of the border clearly show that Pakistan, Afghanistan and NATO have all failed badly in clearing the strategically important border areas of militants, permitting previously dispersed extremist organizations to regroup and prepare new, large-scale attacks on the soil of both countries. Though the security forces of both countries have begun operations to repel further attacks, the Islamabad and Kabul governments are unlikely to be successful until they deal collectively with the issue of cross-border militancy.

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Notes:

1. Author's telephone interviews with Upper Dir locals, July 12, 2011.
2. Author's telephone interviews with tribal elders of Upper Dir and Bajour, July 12, 2011.
3. Author's telephone interview with Aqeel Yousafzai, a Peshawar-based journalist and security analyst, July 11, 2011.
4. Author's interview with Khadim Hussain, a Peshawar-based security analyst, July 13, 2011.
5. Author's telephone interviews with elders of Upper Dir and Bajaur, July 12, 2011.
6. Author's interview with Khadim Hussain, a Peshawar-based security analyst, July 13, 2011.

Radical Islamists Step Up Militancy in West Kazakhstan

By Farkhad Sharip

The ruling elite of Kazakhstan, in its pursuit of foreign investment in the largely oil-dependent economy, invariably depicts the country as an oasis of peace and political stability in Central Asia. Contrasted with the constant political turmoil in Kyrgyzstan and the fragility of Islam Karimov's heavy-handed regime in Uzbekistan, this idyllic picture of Kazakhstan partly reflects reality. This deceptive image, however, dulls public awareness of the growing threat of Islamic extremism in that country.

On the night of June 30, patrolling policemen were unexpectedly attacked by an armed gang in the village of Shubarshi in Aktobe Province (West Kazakhstan). Two policemen were killed on the spot and another officer of the Special Task Force was shot and killed while pursuing the attackers. All members of the gang escaped unharmed and police announced a \$100,000 reward for information leading to the capture of the criminals, although it turned out later that local police possessed detailed information about everyone in the six-member gang, who were all residents of Shubarshi. However, it took the Special Task Force almost two weeks to track down and kill three of the gang members and capture another two alive in Aktobe Province. One of those killed in the fighting, Toktarbek Mambetov, reportedly received training in a terrorist camp in Pakistan (Kommerceskiyi Televizioniyi Kanal-TV, July 11).

In the wake of this costly victory, 16 inmates in a prison near the town of Balkhash in Qaraghandy region (Central Kazakhstan) made a failed escape attempt on July 11 and opened fire on their guards. All of them were reported to have blown themselves up in unclarified circumstances. Police authorities announced that the former detainees belonged to an extremist Islamic organization (KTK TV, July 12).

All these incidents form part of a long chain of terrorist attacks that have taken place over the last three months on an unprecedented scale. Prior to the killing of the policemen in Shubarshi, a 25-year-old suicide bomber penetrated into the regional office of the National Security Committee in the provincial capital of Aktobe and detonated a bomb. A week later a car bomb exploded

near the preliminary detention and investigation center of the National Security Committee in Astana. The bodies of two men identified simply as "Europeans" were found on the scene. Although officials have repeatedly denied any link between these blasts and terrorist organizations, it is notable that these incidents occurred immediately after the government announced its intention to send a limited contingent of peacekeepers to Afghanistan. Following the announcement, threats from Taliban leaders appeared in the local press (*Delovaya Nedelia* [Almaty], May 27).

In none of these cases did authorities fully admit the existence of terrorist groups in Kazakhstan, dismissing numerous incidents with significant religious character as common criminal acts. Nurtay Abykaiev, the chairman of the National Security Committee, stated at the OSCE Experts Conference last October that Kazakhstan is not a breeding ground for religious extremism and that the only existing threat comes from the inflammability of the situation in neighboring countries (Interfax-Kazakhstan, October 14, 2010).

However, Kazakhstan's porous border, the corruptibility of high-ranking officials in law-enforcement bodies and the poverty of a large portion of the population despite an alleged economic prosperity renders the country vulnerable to incursions by Islamic extremists. Following the bomb blasts in Tashkent in 1999 and 2000, Uzbek security services accused Astana (the Kazakhstan capital since 1997) of harboring terrorists of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in the border area with Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan flatly rejected these accusations as unfounded. In 2009 Russian security services reported the killing of an unspecified number of terrorists who allegedly carried Kazakh passports. In February the Russian Federal Security Service (Federal'naya sluzhba bezopasnosti - FSB) announced that two residents of Aktobe, Albert Abdikarimov and Raimbek Yerzhanov, surrendered to Russian security forces when an apartment block was surrounded in Makhachkala, capital of Dagestan (Kursiv [Moscow], February 17; Interfax Central Asia, February 11; *Kommersant*, February 15).

Addressing a meeting of the council of law enforcement bodies, the head of the Mangystau regional department of the National Security Committee, Bolat Shaimanov, admitted that some wounded Chechen fighters received medical treatment in local hospitals (Tengri News [Almaty], April 1, 2010). Kazakhstan cooperates closely with Russian security services in fighting terrorism.

However, in its incessant attempt to internationalize the war against Chechen fighters, Moscow doesn't discriminate between Islamist extremists and separatists.

In the framework of its interaction with international organizations and on the eve of its chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Astana banned 14 radical Islamic organizations and 15 websites propagating religious extremism and terrorism, but these measures proved highly ineffective in the face of the rapidly expanding Wahhabi and Salafi trends in south and west Kazakhstan. All evidence indicates that the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kazakhstan, which until recently was quite successful in consolidating believers around the officially approved moderate Islam, is rapidly losing its battle against religious extremists.

The problem is further complicated by the fact that authorities have no clearly defined strategy of counteracting the threat of Islamist extremism. Given the long history of muted but strong resistance of Sunni believers to officially administered bans and prescriptions, the current crackdown and tactics of repression inherited from the socialist era may prove counterproductive.

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Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood: Internal Divisions and External Challenges in the Post-Mubarak Era

By Andrew Black

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that the United States government was in discussions with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood on June 30. That the U.S. was willing to reach out to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood (MB) - an 83-year old Islamist organization often criticized for providing entrée to jihadism for young Egyptians - marked a significant policy shift for the Obama administration and may signify a new era for the Brotherhood. For the MB, this new era is coming to be defined by the toppling of the Hosni Mubarak regime in Egypt and the replacement of Osama bin Laden as al-Qaeda's *amir* by Egyptian national Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri. Within Egypt, this rapprochement has come at a time of significant upheaval within the MB, as the organization struggles to maintain unity and hegemony within Egyptian Islamism and simultaneously compete for political influence in the rapidly democratizing post-Mubarak era. Complicating matters is the significant change in the rivalry between al-Qaeda and the MB, as defined by the emergence of al-Zawahiri and the apparent success of non-violent protests in Egypt and Tunisia.

Though its methods have changed at times, the MB's long-term goals have remained consistent - namely the reformation of society in keeping with the Qur'an and Sunnah. Jihad remains a central tenet in the MB ideology, although it is now defined along the lines of the "inner struggle," conducive to the Brotherhood's emphasis on non-violent change, grass-roots activism and *da'wa* (proselytization). These views have put the MB in stark contrast with Salafi-Jihadis like those of al-Gama'a al-Islamiya (Egyptian Islamic Jihad - EIJ) and al-Qaeda, a rivalry that will be explored in greater detail below.

The Bothers in Egypt: Losing Unity?

Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin (the Muslim Brotherhood), known in the Arabic world simply as the Ikhwan, was founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna in Egypt as a largely non-violent Salafist organization. In the eight decades since its founding, the MB has had very positive

relations with the Egyptian government at certain times, while at other times the Brotherhood has been the target of state oppression. Far from being a truly homogenous organization, the MB has traditionally attempted to seek a balance among a number of internal streams, from moderate to extreme, in its effort to establish primacy within Egyptian Islamism. The MB has throughout been a driving force for Islamism in Egypt, presenting its constituency with outlets for political expression and access to social services such as the Brotherhood's famed educational, religious, and medical resources. It has been through this holistic approach, anchored in the provision of social programs, that the Brotherhood has successfully woven itself into the fabric of Egyptian society.

Within the Egyptian polity, the MB maintains an avowed doctrine of *wasatiya* (centrism). This concept has been a defining point in the Brotherhood's political activities, and has helped the Brotherhood to develop relationships with interest groups across ideological lines. The group's pragmatism and rationalism became more entrenched with the assumption to leadership positions of the middle generation, a collection of more progressive Brothers who came of age in the university-based Islamist movements in the 1970s and the political pluralism of the 1980s.

The Ikhwan & the Egyptian Revolution

In the wake of the popular revolutionary movement in Tunisia, Egyptian youth took to the streets, bringing with them progressive ideas about governance and using new media to spread their ideals of solidarity and transparency across ideological and religious lines. This dynamic proved challenging for organizations like the Brotherhood, which developed under an Egyptian political establishment defined by strong anti-democratic leadership enforced by a strong state security apparatus. As the revolution was in full swing, the MB struggled to find its voice within this competitive forum of ideas.

The MB's involvement in the revolution was led by its younger generation, which represented the Brotherhood in the 25 January Youth Coalition alongside liberals and secularists. Progressive members of the Brotherhood sought to increase the organization's visibility in the movement, creating photo opportunities for its leaders in Tahrir Square and generating new content on the group's website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed. [1] Though these platforms appear to be maintained by the

MB offices in London, they have nevertheless proved to be valuable sources of information on Ikhwan activities.

Whither the Unified Brotherhood?

In the months since the removal of Mubarak, the MB has been the assumed benefactor of the power vacuum in Cairo, able to use its organizational strength and political experience to dominate the new political order while new political parties scramble to form and register prior to the elections, now postponed to October or November. This has prompted complaints and warnings that the Ikhwan will use its advantage to install an Islamist government in Cairo. However, there is significant evidence from defectors and the Brotherhood's own actions that show that the organization is struggling to maintain cohesiveness and balance between traditional and progressive streams.

As the military took power in Cairo and announced a hasty transition to democracy, the MB began building an Islamist political party. On June 6, the MB's political wing, Hizb al-Horriya wa'l-Adala (Freedom & Justice Party - FJP), was officially recognized by the state. In establishing the FJP, the Brotherhood has attempted to show its populist and liberal credentials by giving voice to women and naming Dr. Rafiq Habib, a Coptic Christian, to be the vice president of the party.

While becoming more active politically, the Brotherhood has been forced to remain adaptable to daily events in Egypt while continuing to strike a balance between its progressive and traditional members. In developing its political strategy, the MB leadership claims to have learned the importance of moderation from recent history - namely the 2005 elections when the success of Brotherhood-endorsed candidates provoked a harsh crackdown by the state. To avoid contentiousness, the MB has announced that it will only be running for a minority position in the new parliament. The MB has stated unequivocally that no member will be permitted to compete in the presidential contest and that MB members are only permitted to join the FJP. The rationale for this, according to Khairat al-Shater, a Brotherhood leader and reputed strongman, is based on the experiences of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria and HAMAS in the Palestinian Territories: "We cannot turn a blind eye to the Gazan and Algerian scenarios. When Islamists there reached power quickly, the military establishment turned against them" (*al-Masry al-Youm* [Cairo], June 20). Moreover, as Mubarak was forced from power, the Brotherhood was rumored to

have negotiated with the military the Brotherhood's withdrawal from the revolution in return for formal recognition of its political party (*al-Masry al-Youm*, April 1).

Splinters Emerge in the Ikhwan

As seen in several recent defections of high profile Brothers, the MB's actions are emblematic of how out of touch and bureaucratic the Ikhwan leadership has become after decades of struggle against the Egyptian state (*Al-Ahram Weekly* [Cairo], July 2). These defections reflect not only the increasing ability of dissenters to establish themselves outside of the MB, but also the internal struggle "between three different generations in the Brotherhood: the leadership, mid-management and the young people who were part of the revolution and gained media exposure" (*Al-Ahram Weekly* [Cairo], July 2). In nearly every case, these defectors have highlighted the MB's difficult position, balancing the increasingly liberal views of a younger generation against an old guard whose conservatism is both an anchor for the organization and a source of criticism and fear from outsiders.

Prominent among the defectors are Ibrahim al-Za'farani and Abu al-Fotouh. Al-Za'farani stepped away from the MB in March 2011 to establish al-Nahda ("Renaissance"), a political party based in Alexandria (*al-Masry al-Youm*, March 25). Abu al-Fotouh's departure from the MB came after al-Fotouh publicly declared his candidacy for president, contravening the MB's policy (*al-Masry al-Youm*, June 20; *Egypt Daily News*, June 20). In June, the MB publicly announced it was revoking al-Fotouh's membership, forcing him to pursue his candidacy as an independent. Leaders like al-Fotouh and Za'farani are considered part of the MB's middle generation, which was largely responsible for reinvigorating the MB, and they likely possess the networks and message that would keep the Brotherhood linked with the revolutionary spirit. Other political parties being established by former MB members include al-Riyada ("Pioneer") and al-Tayar al-Masri ("Egyptian Current"), a youth-led organization founded by the trio of Islam Lotfi, Muhammad al-Kasaas and Muhammad Abbas, who represented the MB in the 25 January Youth coalition. Their left-leaning party claims to promote secularism in government with an Islamic frame of reference (*Ahram Online*, June 22).

Thus the Egyptian MB finds itself at a crossroads. On the one hand, the Egyptian polity is increasingly shaped by

the ideals of a younger and newly empowered generation who forged their place and populist credentials during the protests against Mubarak. Their deeds have brought political opportunity and reinvigorated constituencies in Egypt's urban areas, precisely the space needed by the MB to establish a lasting political presence. On the other hand, the MB leadership is seeking to maintain its traditional mores, by following a political plan that is seemingly more in keeping with past iterations of the Egyptian political landscape. Though in the past the Brotherhood was positioned to prevent significant defections, the new political realities are such that disaffected members of the MB can now establish themselves and their agendas outside the Brotherhood's sphere. Consequently, it appears the MB leadership has chosen a middle path of careful calibration and balance, attempting to seize a moderate amount of key political territory without provoking backlash. In doing so, the leadership has risked appearing disorganized and representative of old style Egyptian politics.

International Influence: The Ikhwan Versus al-Qaeda

As the overthrow of Mubarak has fundamentally changed the MB's place in Egypt, so too will the death of Osama bin Laden change the ongoing ideological struggle between the Ikhwan and al-Qaeda, as well as other Salafi-Jihadi groups. [2] The confluence of these two factors—a leadership change in al-Qaeda and the success of non-violent political activism—have fundamentally altered the influence each organization has on the Arab street.

Though commonly conflated, al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood represent opposing interpretations of Islamism, and their differences have manifested in bitter and even hostile rivalry in Egypt and beyond. In 2006-2007, al-Qaeda and its affiliate in Iraq engaged in vitriolic and violent exchanges with the Brotherhood-linked al-Jaysh al-Islami fi'l-Iraq (Islamic Army of Iraq). The rivalry became so deep that al-Qaeda's leadership in Iraq would pejoratively identify nearly any Muslim opponent as "Ikhwani." Core al-Qaeda leaders like al-Zawahiri have also feuded with Egypt's Brotherhood and HAMAS (an MB offshoot) over their willingness to engage in political processes.

In an effort to prove its hostility toward al-Qaeda, the MB's official website maintains a regularly updated page entitled "MB vs. Qaeda," providing readers with ideological, strategic, and tactical insights into the rivalry. While al-Qaeda and the Brotherhood share a

strategic objective, their interpretations of that objective and the means by which to achieve it place them at odds. [3] Where the Brotherhood sees change as a long term, bottom-up and largely peaceful endeavor, al-Qaeda pursues it through the violent activities of a faithful vanguard. Although Abdullah Azzam was a key member of the Brotherhood, his view of violent jihad as *fard al-ayn* (“an individual duty”) has not been adopted by the mainstream MB. [4] Al-Qaeda and other Salafi-Jihadis, however, rely on Azzam’s writings as foundational to their justification of jihad. While the Brotherhood supported elements of the Iraq insurgency and HAMAS’ attacks against Israel, the MB has largely sworn off of violent tactics in pursuit of political and social goals.

Politically, the differences are even more apparent. Where al-Qaeda positions itself as anti-system and in pursuit of a purist interpretation of the Quran, the Brotherhood takes a more pragmatic approach, permitting political activism within the governing establishment. Nevertheless, the relationship is more complicated, as both organizations are Salafist in nature and profess comparable ambitions. The Brotherhood, for example, supports the Palestinian opposition to Israel and Iraqi insurgents fighting against the U.S.-led coalition. Moreover, they each appeal to conservative Muslims and have propagated similar diagnoses of socio-political issues. [5]

Revived Animosity?

Al-Qaeda’s new *amir*, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, has presented himself as more vehement than his predecessor in his criticisms of the Brotherhood. The leadership transition has therefore likely altered the zero-sum competition between al-Qaeda and the MB in the following ways:

- The significance of the al-Qaeda leadership change lies with al-Zawahiri’s Egyptian legacy, his prior leadership of the EIJ, and his vitriolic criticisms of the Ikhwan’s political and ideological “deviations.” Having grown up in a family with close ties to the Brotherhood and having spent his formative years in jihadi groups like the EIJ, al-Zawahiri became engrossed in Islamic activism against the Cairo government. However, in public statements and works like his book *Bitter Harvest*, al-Zawahiri has condemned the Brotherhood, viewing its long-term strategy

as inappropriate and its participation in politics as a deviation. With his succession to the leadership of al-Qaeda and his continued focus on Egypt, it should be expected that al-Zawahiri will direct al-Qaeda to become more heavily involved in Egypt, perhaps rekindling the battle with the MB.

- The successful overthrow of the Egyptian and Tunisian governments through non-violent means provides a clear counter-argument to al-Qaeda’s violent, anti-system view. As al-Qaeda’s terrorist strategy was weakened by each peaceful protest, the Brotherhood’s approach was seemingly validated and strengthened through the group’s presence and placement in the subsequent Egyptian polity. Attempting to capitalize on this, the Brotherhood’s official website carried a criticism of al-Zawahiri’s April 2011 statement, stating it was “a desperate attempt by al Qaeda to impose itself as a player for change amidst the huge popular and international support for non-violent revolutions across the Arab world” (Ikhwan Web, April 17).

Conclusion: Which MB will survive 2011?

Looking toward Egypt’s upcoming elections as a seminal event, the future of the Egyptian MB appears uncertain. Weakened by internal divisions but strengthened by the removal of Hosni Mubarak and the validation of its argument against the Salafi-Jihadi camp, the organization will be forced to confront myriad internal and external challenges. With the removal of Mubarak as a coalescing force for the Brotherhood and the creation of a rapidly inclusive political space in Egypt, the Brotherhood’s more progressive members will either seek to have their voices heard within the group or defect to establish their own platforms. Though the Brotherhood’s leadership will doubtless attempt to maintain unity - evidenced in statements made by the FJP during the July 8 “Day of Perseverance” protests - it is unlikely the older leadership will permit the Brotherhood to play a dominant role in the immediate post-revolution era, fearing the sort of backlash experienced in 2005. This will naturally lead to the loss of key members of the Egyptian MB’s progressive, middle generation, thus increasing the influence of the organization’s more conservative streams.

More concerning is the potential role for more extreme elements that have previously been moderated by

membership in the Brotherhood and firewalled from participation in jihadism. [6] Should al-Qaeda's increasingly Egyptian persona become attractive and its anti-system argument be validated by disruptions to the democratic process, such as in Palestine or Algeria, these extremist defectors may auger a new era in Egyptian jihadism. Thus for counter-terrorism planners, the Egyptian MB's ability or failure to maintain unity in the Islamist movement may have severe consequences for the future of jihadism in Egypt.

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Notes:

1. The Egyptian MB's Twitter handles are @ikhwan for Arabic and @ikhwanwebcom for English.
2. An excellent exposition of the Ikhwan versus al-Qaeda can be found in Marc Lynch, "Islam Divided between Salafi-Jihad and the Ikhwan," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33(6), May 3, 2010, pp. 467-487.
3. Wiktorowicz provides a useful typology of Salafism which elucidates the historical development of several key differences between "politicos" like the Muslim Brotherhood and jihadis like al-Qaeda. See Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29(3), 2006, p207-239.
4. The Muslim Brotherhood does support popular resistance and violent opposition to Israel and the U.S. occupation of Muslim countries. Ikhwanweb.com features a biography of the late Shaykh Ahmad Yassin, former head of HAMAS, as an icon of the Palestinian resistance to Israel. See <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=23862>. For Abdullah Azzam's ideology, see: Andrew McGregor, "'Jihad and the Rifle Alone': 'Abdullah 'Azzam and the Islamist Revolution,'" *Journal of Conflict Studies* 33(2), Fall 2003, pp.92-113.
5. Lynch, op cit, 2010. See also *Terrorism Monitor*, March 23, 2006, <http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/JCS/Fall03/mcgregor.pdf>.