



# Terrorism Monitor

In-Depth Analysis of the War on Terror

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Somali National  
Theatre Bombing

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## UYGHUR MILITANTS RESPOND TO NEW CHINESE LIST OF "TERRORISTS"

The Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) released a response in late April to the latest list of Uyghur "terrorists" prepared by China's Ministry of Public Security. The TIP communiqué was entitled "A Statement Regarding the Declaration of a 'Terrorists' List for the Third Time by the Chinese Government" (Islam Awazi, April 23).

The Chinese list of six suspects, complete with descriptions, aliases and photos, is consistent with previous Chinese statements that describe Uyghur militants as members of the now defunct Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) rather than members of the TIP. [1] Leading the list of suspects is Nurmemet Memetmin, who is described as the "commander of the ETIM." [2] According to the Chinese list, Memetmin was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in a "South Asian country," (i.e. Pakistan, which is always described this way in statements with possible implications for Chinese-Pakistani relations), but had escaped in 2006 to take up the planning of new attacks against China, including the July 30-31, 2011 attacks on civilians in Kashgar allegedly led by the late Memtieli Tiliwalidi (see *Terrorism Monitor*, April 26).

The TIP used the statement to reject their categorization as "terrorists" by the Chinese Ministry of Public Security:

No doubt those who were accused of terrorism by the oppressive Chinese government are the martyrs who died in the torture chambers defending their religion, honor, and all their rights

deprived by the aggressive Chinese... Let everyone know that the jihad in Turkistan is not a terrorist act but rather it is an *aqida* [belief] and religious obligation and responsibility that is laid on our shoulders because of the aggressions of the Chinese against us... It is a legitimate right for the Muslims of Eastern Turkistan, and it is prohibited for any person to describe it by another name.

The Uyghur Islamists see in the latest list an effort to create divisions within the Islamic community in Xinjiang:

The purpose of the Chinese government in [making] these lists is to cut the link between the mujahideen and the Muslims morally and materially, and safeguard its rule in Eastern Turkistan. But how could they do that, since our proud Muslim Turkistani people, who have intelligence and foresight, knows the cunning of communist China and the extent of its crimes?

The TIP concluded their statement with a call to the international Muslim community to “answer the call to jihad and join the ranks of the mujahideen” in the struggle against the “atheist communist government of China.”

China’s Ministry of Public Security also announced that the suspects’ funds and assets would be frozen, though this was likely to be little more than a formality given the unlikelihood any of the six have funds or investments of any significance in Chinese financial institutions. Given the arms used in many of the attacks recently attributed by China to the ETIM (knives, agricultural implements, etc.) and the apparent lack of planning or coordination in these attacks, the remark of a Ministry of Public Security spokesman that the ETIM was “the most direct and real safety threat that China faces” can only be interpreted as an indication that Beijing believes there are no other significant threats to China’s security (Xinhua, April 6). Nonetheless, a spokesman for China’s foreign ministry, Hong Lei, did not refrain from suggesting the Uyghur militants posed a major international threat: “The evidence is incontrovertible that this organization’s violent terror activities seriously threaten not only China’s national security, but also the peace and tranquility of the region and the world”

(Reuters, April 6).

Meanwhile two Uyghur prisoners in the Guantanamo Bay detention camp have been freed after ten years imprisonment without charges and four years after a U.S. court ordered their release. China has demanded their extradition, though the United States, which has determined Uyghur prisoners will suffer persecution at Chinese hands, has banned the prisoners’ entry to U.S. soil. The Uyghurs will thus be settled in a willing third party nation, in this case El Salvador, following earlier resettlement of released Uyghur prisoners in small nations such as Switzerland, Bermuda, Albania and Palau (Reuters, April 20).

Notes:

1. For the list, see: The Ministry of Public Security of the People’s Republic of China, April 6, 2012, <http://www.mps.gov.cn/n16/n1237/n1342/n803715/3197850.html>. For an earlier list, see Terrorism Focus Brief, October 20, 2008.
2. Other transliterations of the name from the Chinese include Memtimin Memet, Memetiming Memeti and Nurmamat Maimaitimin.

## MILITARY COUP BRINGS GUINEA-BISSAU CLOSER TO NARCO-STATE STATUS

The leaders of the April 12 military coup in the West African nation of Guinea-Bissau have claimed they were forced to act in the perpetually unstable and impoverished nation by the alleged threat posed to the Guinea-Bissau military by an Angolan military mission. However, a closer examination of events reveals darker motives related to Guinea-Bissau's emergence as a prime transit point for the shipment of South American narcotics to European markets.

The coup came at an inopportune time, just as the nation's harvest of cashew nuts, its leading cash crop, was about to go to market. Infrastructure was slowly improving and there were a number of other positive indicators that have now been reversed by political instability. Guinea-Bissau is a religiously and ethnically diverse country of Sunni Muslims, traditional animists and Roman Catholics belonging to five major tribal groups and a handful of minor groups.

Events were set in motion by the death earlier this year of President Malam Bacai Sanha following a long illness. According to the Guinea-Bissau constitution, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Raimundo Pereira, was sworn in as acting president until elections could be held. However, when Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Junior took 49 percent of the vote in the first round of the elections on March 18, his potential opponent in the second round, Kumba Yala (with close ties to the military), joined the other four candidates of the first round in seeking an annulment of the vote. Gomes was unable to establish cooperation with Balanta tribesmen in the military leadership, who see their kinsman Kumba Yala as their leader (All Africa, April 23). When Kumba Yala was elected president in 2000, he quickly elevated many members of his Balanta tribe to top positions in the government and military. However, when the powerful General Anusmane Mané refused to accept a senior post in Yala's government he was assassinated by the president's men.

Gomes was the candidate of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC), established in 1956 by revolutionary Amílcar Cabral, who overthrew the Portuguese colonial administration with the help of Cuba and the Eastern Bloc in 1973. The nation was founded in bloodshed as the PAIGC massacred all those who had fought in the Portuguese colonial forces and Cabral himself was

assassinated shortly after the Portuguese withdrawal. Since 1998 alone, Guinea-Bissau's military has mounted four coups, engaged in a civil war and assassinated a host of national leaders, including President João Bernardo Vieira in 2009, effectively stymying any efforts at national development.

Raimundo and Gomes were both arrested by the self-titled "Military Command," though the junta maintained it was acting only in reaction to the presence of foreign [i.e. Angolan] troops in Guinea-Bissau. The Military Command is led by Army chief-of-staff General Antonio Indjai. After roughly two weeks of detention, Raimundo and Gomes were released on April 27 and allowed to leave for Côte d'Ivoire (AFP, April 27). In an April 13 communiqué the coup leaders declared they had taken action to prevent the planned "annihilation" of the armed forces and the murder of General Indjai (IRIN, April 23). By happy coincidence the coup also brought an abrupt end to inquiries into the military-linked political assassinations of 2009 and further military indiscipline in December, 2011. [1]

To aid in sweeping reforms of Guinea-Bissau's security forces (including the retirement of many leading officers) the PAIGC sought assistance from Angola, another former Portuguese colony. Angola has invested oil revenues in a number of important economic projects in Guinea-Bissau, including bauxite mining, banking, oil production and the construction of a new deep-water port (Executive Analysis Ltd. via All Africa, April 17).

The result was the deployment in March, 2011 of the Angolan Technical Military and Security Mission in Guinea Bissau (MISSANG-GB), which began a three-phase operation in Guinea-Bissau with the training of 400 men in police and military procedures (O Pais Online [Luanda], April 20). The Angolan mission was deployed with the approval of the Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP- Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries), a Lusophone version of the British Commonwealth or the French Francophonie.

Luanda had already announced two days before the coup that MISSANG would be withdrawn, but this did not appear to satisfy the putschists, who may have used the mission's presence to justify their coup. Accusations that MISSANG was being supplied with heavy weaponry from Angola was not denied by Angolan deputy defense minister General Salviano Sequira "Kianda," who noted that "Personnel training could not be done with sticks and toys. We have to bring arms, fighting techniques and

artillery” (O Pais Online [Luanda], April 28). Though the Angolans have demanded security guarantees during the withdrawal, Colonel Correia de Barros of the Angolan Center for Strategic Studies has noted that “Any attack on the forces of MISSANG [will] have consequences mainly for the armed forces of Guinea-Bissau” (O Pais Online [Luanda], April 20).

Trafficking of narcotics from South America through Guinea-Bissau to Europe began in earnest in 2005 and has been elevated to a point where the nation risks becoming a failed “narco-state.” Control of the nation’s narcotics trade is behind much of the struggle for control of the security services in Guinea-Bissau. Army chief-of-staff General Batista Tagme Na Waie (a Balanta tribesman) was reported to have been killed by a bomb in March, 2009 a week after discovering 200 kg of cocaine stashed in a hanger belonging to the general staff. The next day a group of soldiers beat and killed President João Bernardo Vieira in his home in what appeared to be a revenge attack (AFP, March 6, 2009). Vieira had himself initially taken power in a 1980 coup.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has decided to deploy an intervention force of 500 to 600 men under the command of Colonel-Major Barro Gnibanga of Burkina Faso. The mission will be tasked with facilitating the departure of MISSANG, maintaining security during the transition process and preparing conditions for the reform of Guinea-Bissau’s security forces (Diário de Notícias Globo [Lisbon], April 28).

There are suspicions in Angola that ECOWAS is determined to undermine the CPLP nations’ traditional ties with Guinea-Bissau by using the military intervention to support the installation of pro-ECOWAS individuals in senior positions of the government and security services (O Pais [Luanda], April 20). The military junta in Bissau has issued a statement that the arrival of foreign troops in Guinea-Bissau would be regarded as an invasion and resisted by the military (VOA, April 20).

However, not all the Angolan troops may be on their way back to Luanda. The CPLP has suggested that some of the Angolans might be incorporated into the ECOWAS mission after taking into account “the experience of MISSANG on the ground” in Guinea-Bissau (O Pais Online [Luanda], April 20). French foreign minister Alain Juppé has indicated that France could provide the ECOWAS mission with “logistical, material or

intelligence support” (AFP, April 27).

Although the latest coup has been bloodless so far, there are reports that PAIGC MPs and party officials have been arrested in significant numbers. There are fears that a military intervention could produce violent resistance and possibly launch the beleaguered nation into a new civil war.

Politics in Guinea-Bissau resembles a gangland struggle for supremacy, a view that has been given added credence by the emergence of the nation as a major transshipment point for narcotics. The coup appears to have been designed to prevent any meaningful reform of the security services that would inhibit the existing military leadership from continuing to enrich themselves through the facilitation and protection of narcotics traffickers.

Note:

1. Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Jean Ping, on the Situations in Guinea Bissau, Mali and between the Sudan and South Sudan, delivered to the AU Peace and Security Council, April 24, 2012.



## Al-Shabaab Split Threatens to Open New Conflict Between Somalia's Islamists

*Muhyadin Ahmed Roble*

Despite recent celebrations of its merger with al-Qaeda, Somalia's Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen movement has been suffering from a power struggle in its leadership for the past two years. Though attempts have been made to conceal it, the rift is believed to have contributed to al-Shabaab's loss of Mogadishu, the national capital, as well as other strategic towns in southern Somalia. Contributing to the cracks in the movement's solidarity is the military pressure being applied against al-Shabaab on several fronts. This has led to a greater reliance on al-Qaeda style tactics such as the May 1 suicide bombing in Dusamareb that killed three Somali members of parliament (Reuters, May 1).

The ongoing rift between al-Shabaab official leader Shaykh Ahmed Abdi Godane "Abu Zubayr" and Shaykh Mukhtar Robow "Abu Mansur," a senior commander and former spokesman of the group, has now been joined by Shaykh Hassan Dahir Aweys, a founder of Somalia's Islamic movement and former leader of the now defunct independent Islamist movement Hizb al-Islam, which merged with al-Shabaab in December, 2010. Aweys, whose group was pressured to merge with al-Shabaab by Godane's allies, now appears ready to back Abu Mansur should he make a bid for the group's leadership.

The quarrel between the movement's leaders became public earlier this year when American al-Shabaab member Omar Hammami (a.k.a. Abu Mansur al-Amriki) used a short online video clip on March 16 to express his fear that his life was in danger from other al-Shabaab members:

I record this message today because I feel that my life may be endangered by Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen due to some differences that occurred between us regarding matters of the Shari'a and matters of strategy. [1]

Al-Amriki, who was perhaps the best known al-Shabaab propagandist through his English-language statements and jihadi rap videos, provided no further details in his

message, but Ahmed Abdi, a Nairobi-based political analyst, said al-Amriki had succeeded in revealing the hidden rift over ideological and strategy differences among al-Shabaab. [2]

Al-Shabaab's press office turned to its Twitter account to deny that the group intended to cause any harm to al-Amriki: "HSM is surprised by the video of Abu Mansur al-Amriki that surfaced on the internet recently claiming that his life was 'endangered' by al-Shabaab." [3] The group also pledged a formal investigation to verify the authenticity of the video and the motivations behind it. Only days later, Shaykh Abdirahman Hudeyfa, the newly-appointed governor of Juba region, confirmed that Omar Hammami had been detained at a Shabaab meeting near Kismayo for the purpose of investigation (SomaliaReport, March 19). Though unconfirmed reports circulated that Hammami had been beheaded on April 4 at the order of al-Shabaab's Shaykh Ahmed Abdi Godane, he has since been seen in the Shabaab-held port town of Kismayo under heavy guard (SomaliaReport, April 19).

The leadership dispute was further inflamed when Shaykh Hassan Dahir Aweys used a Friday sermon on March 30 in the coastal town of Marka (100 km south of Mogadishu) to fearlessly attack al-Shabaab's top leadership, accusing them of monopolizing jihad as well as globalizing the conflict by the merger with al-Qaeda. [4]

Aweys seemed to be particularly angered by a new al-Shabaab *fatwa* that banned the establishment of any new armed Islamic group or Islamic political party in Somalia as of March 26. The *fatwa* appeared to be directed at preventing the formation of a new nationalist rebel group from the allied forces of Shaykh Hassan Dahir Aweys and Shaykh Mukhtar Robow "Abu Mansur." The nationalist faction within the movement is trying to escape al-Shabaab's current unpopularity and will be watching closely for a political opportunity to open up when the mandate of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) expires in August, 2012. [5]

While acknowledging al-Shabaab's well-known policy of assassinating anyone who becomes a threat to the group, Shaykh Aweys stated that all those in the Islamist movement had fallen silent due to fear of al-Shabaab's wrath and called on al-Shabaab to "Stop the threats and assassinations of innocent Muslims in the name of Islam. The world has passed the age of threats." However, al-Shabaab's subsequent discovery of a major arms cache

(including anti-tank missiles) in a former Hizb al-Islam stronghold seemed an ominous portent of future clashes between the Islamist factions. Though Aweys denied ownership of the weapons, he nonetheless urged al-Shabaab to return the weapons he described as Muslim property and promised to follow up on the issue until al-Shabaab provides an explanation of why the weapons were seized. Al-Shabaab's military spokesman, Shaykh Abdul Aziz "Abu Musab" said any questions related to the weapon cache will be resolved by an Islamic court. Nevertheless, as the splits grow greater in al-Shabaab's leadership, various factions in the movement may be preparing for an internal battle in which Shaykh Abdi Godane's global jihadists will fight tooth and nail to suppress his rivals in any way possible.

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Notes:

1. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mvXeMwztYg> , March 16, 2012.
2. Author's interview with political analyst Ahmed Abdi, Nairobi, April 20, 2012.
3. <https://twitter.com/#!/HSMPress>, March 17, 2012.
4. Shaykh Hassan Dahir Aweys' Friday sermon, Marka, March 30, 2012 <http://www.somdaily.com/2012/04/01/xasan-daahir-oo-weerarray-al-shabaab-dhageyso/>.
5. Statement from Shaykh Ahmed Abdi Godane, March 26, 2012, <http://www.raxanreeb.com/wp-content/uploads/Bayan-ham.pdf>.

## Low Level Boundary Dispute Intensifies as Iran and the UAE Contest Control of Strategic Gulf Islands

*Nima Adelkhab*

The April 22 visit of Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to the Island of Abu Musa near the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz has triggered new tensions between Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (al-Jazeera, April 16; Gulf News, April 16). The decades-long territorial dispute over the islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs has been a contentious issue between the two countries since 1971, when the military forces of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi occupied the islands on the eve of the formation of the UAE.

The UAE condemned Ahmadinejad's visit as "provocative" and recalled its ambassador to Iran after what it described as "a flagrant violation" of its territorial sovereignty (Emirates News Agency, April 13; *The National* [Abu Dhabi], April 13; Radio Zamaneh [Amsterdam], April 17). As the United States called on Iran to enter negotiations with the UAE, Tehran summoned the Swiss Ambassador (who acts as an intermediary in the absence of diplomatic relations between the United States and Iran) to protest Washington's position over the disputed islands. Iran maintains it has valid and indisputable historical claims to the islands and has accordingly suggested that talks with the UAE are needed only to clear up "misunderstandings" (Tehran Times, April 20).

In response to a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) statement offering full support to the UAE in the event of foreign "aggression" in the Gulf, General Ahmad Reza Pourdastan, the commander of Iranian ground forces, announced on April 19 that Iran "will not allow any country to carry out an invasion. If these disturbances are not solved through diplomacy, the military forces are ready to show the power of Iran to the offender" (al-Arabiya, April 20).

The latest Iran-UAE conflict over the islands is, however, less about territorial disputes and more an attempt by Iran to exert power at a time when U.S.-led sanctions and domestic problems are posing difficulties for the stability of the regime. The key point of contention

is the extent to which Iran can maintain its sphere of military influence over the Strait of Hormuz as a critical strategic location for containing U.S. and Israeli military threats. Fully aware that the UAE will not engage in a military defense of their claim, Tehran's willingness to flex its muscles over the disputed islands is by and large meant to send a clear signal to its adversaries that it can resort to military action in the event of an attack against its nuclear sites (Zamaneh Radio, April 19).

Both Iran and UAE claim historical sovereignty over the islands. From the Emirates' point of view, the islands have belonged to the Qasim tribe since the 18th century, when Arab commercial activities extended to both the northern Iranian and southern Arabian shores of the Gulf. After 1750, the Qasimi rulers of the Sharjah and Ras al-Khameh Emirates maintained control over the islands from Lengeh (a nearby port in modern Iran that was controlled at the time by Arabs from the coastal city of al-Khobar in the Arabian Peninsula) and the city of Sharjah (based in today's UAE) (Gulf News, April 25). There is no evidence Iran ever controlled the islands before 1904, when, according to the Sharjah Emirate, the Iranian Qajar dynasty (1785-1925) challenged Sharjah's sovereignty over the islands by attempting to invade them. The British recognized Arab sovereignty over the islands as early as 1820, when they began to get involved in the Persian Gulf. After a British takeover of the islands in 1921, their Arab ownership continued to be recognized by London by making the Sharjah Emirate the administrative authority in the islands. The Emirates describe several Iranian attempts to take over the islands in the early 20th century as illegal and insist that Arab sovereignty was inherited by the UAE with its formation in 1971.

From Iran's point of view, the 1971 takeover of Abu Musa by the Pahlavi military just 20 hours after the departure of British troops in accordance with the end of the British Treaty of Protection and the federation of the seven Emirates into the UAE was justified in light of Iranian historical claims over the islands. According to Iran, the 1971 joint administrative agreement between Iran and Sharja, defined in terms of joint ownership of the territories with an Iranian military presence on the islands, was largely the product of British involvement in the negotiation process, with London still recognizing Arab rights to the islands. [2] In reality, Iranians argue, the islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs have belonged to Persia since pre-Islamic times. While Iranians recognize that the Arab Qasim tribe ruled over the islands in the 18th century, they maintain

the Qasimis did so from the Iranian port of Lengeh under the authority of the Persian Qajar dynasty. The UAE, therefore, has no justified historical claim to the islands. In fact, the takeover of the islands by Iran was primarily an attempt to end British colonial rule over Iranian territories and was not intended to stir hostility against the Arab Emirates, though the 1971 Iranian occupation was met with resistance that resulted in the death of several Iranian soldiers. [2]. The latest calls by the Iranian parliament to make Abu Musa an independent province and develop it as a tourist destination are ultimately the extension of Iran's claims to historical sovereignty (Fars News April 17).

The three disputed islands, however, have remained integral to the nationalist discourses of the two nations, with neither side willing to compromise over joint control of the islands. This has left little room for progress on power sharing and, more importantly, resolving potential military confrontations between the two countries, especially with increased Iranian military activity in the Persian Gulf.

Beyond the historical tensions, there are three important political realities behind Ahmadinejad's visit to the island of Abu Musa:

- Amid the ongoing nuclear negotiations, Tehran appears to be sending a clear message to Washington that it still considers the Strait of Hormuz a potential site for launching attacks against oil shipments in the event of U.S. participation in a military attack. The three islands are in a strategic location where the depth of the water between the islands provides a passageway for tankers and other commercial ships to reach the Strait of Hormuz.
- In light of the recent increase in tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Tehran seems to be warning the GCC and especially the UAE of the consequences of their participation in U.S.-led sanctions and possible collaboration with the United States in the case of a military attack. While Iran knows that the UAE will refrain from engaging in any military retaliation to its occupation of the Gulf islands, the latest provocative moves by Iran serve to remind the Persian Gulf states that Iran still maintains regional

ambitions and a will to defend its perceived sphere of influence against its regional adversaries.

- Most importantly, Ahmadinejad's visit to Abu Musa could also reflect an ongoing factional divide between Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and the Iranian president, a conflict that resulted in the defeat of Ahmadinejad and his followers at the hands of the Supreme Leader's supporters in the March 2012 parliamentary elections. Since spring 2011, Ahmadinejad has attempted to defy the authority of the Supreme Leader on key issues related to governance and especially management over various state agencies. While the tensions have subsided considerably in recent months, Ahmadinejad has sought to demonstrate his strength at various critical moments in order to remind the conservative political establishment of his ability to influence Iranian domestic politics. The President's visit to the island, the first ever by a president in the history of the Islamic Republic, is a clear attempt to boost nationalist sentiments and bolster popular support for a faction that is seeking to find a place in Iranian politics after the end of Ahmadinejad's second presidential term in 2013.

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Note:

1. Richard A. Mobley, "The Tunbs and Abu Musa Islands: Britain's Perspective," *Middle East Journal* 57(4), 2003, pp. 627-645
2. R.P. Owen, "The British Withdrawal from the Persian Gulf," *The World Today*, 28(2), 1972, pp. 75-81.
3. Ibid, p.78.

## German Trials Highlight the Role of the IMU as a Feeder for al-Qaeda Operations in Europe

*Raffaello Pantucci*

Two separate trials are currently underway in Germany that have highlighted the particular role of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) as a feeder group for German jihadists who end up working alongside al-Qaeda. The first is a case in Koblenz involving Ahmad Wali Siddiqui, a German-Afghan who was captured in July 2010 by American forces at a taxi stand in Kabul (*Der Spiegel*, February 28, 2011). The second case involves Yusuf Ocak and Maqsood Lodin, German and Austrian nationals respectively who were captured after careful detective work by German forces seeking to intercept radicals they suspected were behind videos threatening Germany (*Der Spiegel*, June 18, 2011; AP, June 20, 2011). The three men are all standing trial accused of ties to the highest echelons of al-Qaeda and seem to have made their connections to the group through the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). Their trials have cast a new light on the particular ties between Germany and the Central Asian militants.

### The Unsuccessful Jihad of Ahmad Wali Siddiqui

Ahmad Wali Siddiqui's ties to militancy go back to his time in Hamburg as an Islamist on the fringes of the community in which Mohammed Atta's September 11 cell formed around the infamous al-Quds mosque (later renamed the Taiba Mosque) (*Der Spiegel*, August 9, 2010; AFP, August 9, 2010). After moving to Germany as a 16-year-old in 1990, Siddiqui achieved little in life beyond failing at business before encountering Moroccan Mounir al-Motassadeq while they both worked at the Hamburg airport in 1997 (AP, October 8, 2010; *Der Spiegel*, February 8). Al-Motassadeq was later convicted in Germany of supporting the September 11 cell. On the stand, Siddiqui denied being close to al-Motassadeq, though it was revealed that he had driven al-Motassadeq's father some 400 kilometres to visit his son in prison and had holidayed with al-Motassadeq and their wives in Morocco in 2002 (AP, March 19). [1] It was not until March 2009, however, that Siddiqui decided that it was time to join the fighters in Waziristan. Siddiqui joined a contingent of 11 Germans (nine men



and two of their wives) that left in four separate groups starting on February 4, 2009. Along with his wife and brother, Siddiqui belonged to the second cell, which had intended to use as their guide an older member, Assadullah Muslih, an Afghan who had long been moving back and forth between Pakistan and Germany. However, Muslih seems to have disappeared soon after he took the first cell to Pakistan, leaving the aspiring jihadis to their own devices (*Der Spiegel*, October 18, 2010).

Those that made it re-grouped in Mir Ali in Waziristan later in 2009. Here they were absorbed by the IMU, which had by this point established itself as a home for German jihadis. According to Siddiqui, the group had gone to the region to connect with al-Qaeda, but was instead re-directed to the IMU after they met a pair of German jihadis in the region. They were brought into the group's trust and met leader Tahir Yuldashev at a wedding where they pledged allegiance to him (*Der Spiegel*, February 28). Things were not always so positive, however, as they found themselves largely unable to communicate with the Uzbek jihadis. According to Siddiqui's account, a trainer at one point threatened to beat him after Siddiqui experienced a fall that aggravated an old injury and prevented him from training. The commander settled for firing a shot near his head. Siddiqui's brother similarly got into a clash with another of the trainers and the brothers were able to broker their way out of the IMU camp after they agreed to produce a recruitment video for the group (AP, March 20). At this point, they found their way to al-Qaeda, though the group was initially suspicious of the men.

As with the IMU, they seem to have been brought into the group's trust relatively quickly and were allowed to train alongside the group using heavy weapons. In the first half of 2010, they participated in a meeting at which they met a fellow German jihadist from the Hamburg cell, Said Bahaji, an individual connected to the September 11 Hamburg group who had fled to Pakistan a week prior to 9/11. However, the most significant encounter was much later with Yunis al-Mauretani, whom Siddiqui and German jihadist Rami Makanesi state they met in mid-2010. The al-Qaeda commander arrived at a camp where the Germans were staying with stories of a plot being planned with cells in Italy, France and the UK to launch Mumbai-style assaults on European cities. Al-Mauretani was apparently eager for the Germans to return home and undertake fundraising and planning in Germany (Der

*Spiegel*, October 11, 2010). However, the plot was soon disrupted, with Rami Makanesi handing himself over to authorities, Ahmad Wali Siddiqui being captured by U.S. forces in Kabul as he plotted his trip back to Germany and the remaining members being killed by a drone strike in late 2010.

### The Deutsche Taliban Mujahideen

The story of Yusuf Ocak and Maqsood Lodin is different and yet similar in many ways to that of Siddiqui. Ocak and Lodin were drawn from a group of young German extremists who went to Pakistan to join the Deutsche Taliban Mujahideen (DTM), an offshoot of the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) that formed under the tutelage of the Pakistani Taliban and the IJU in response to the growing numbers of Germans coming to fight jihad. [2] Leaving months after Siddiqui's Hamburg group, Yusuf Ocak was ensconced in Waziristan by September 2009 where he helped found the DTM (Deutsche Welle, January 25). By late December, 2009 he was videotaping missile attacks on U.S. bases in Afghanistan (*Der Spiegel*, June 19, 2011). Ocak appeared in a video where he threatened Germany with attacks, leaving an audio trail that German investigators were able to trace, leading to his capture (Austrian Times, February 2). As well as helping establish the DTM and producing videos for the group, Ocak used the internet to reach out to prospective members and recruits in Germany. Lodin, meanwhile, was an active fundraiser for the group (Handelsblatt, January 25).

The DTM was a short-lived group that for a while seemed to be a new hub of German-origin terrorist networks in Afghanistan-Pakistan. However, with the April, 2010 death of their leader, Ahmet Manavbasi (a former drug dealer from Lower Saxony), the group seems to have largely collapsed with Yusuf Ocak being picked up by al-Qaeda. This was around the same time that Siddiqui and Makanesi were being recruited by Yunis al-Mauretani for his European terrorist plot and the new German recruits from the old DTM would have been prime targets for recruitment as well. Ocak denies having encountered al-Mauretani, but was apparently taught to use the same encryption programs (Asrar and Camouflage) as Rami Makanesi admits to having learned in the training camps (*Der Spiegel*, May 9, 2011; *Die Tageszeitung*, January 25). More incriminating than this, however, was a series of documents found on an encrypted flash drive in Ocak's underwear when he was captured that appear to be a series of internal al-Qaeda documents (*Die Zeit*, March 15). The documents are

apparently a series of internal planning documents written by senior members of al-Qaeda. These include a series of reports believed to be written by British al-Qaeda member Rashid Rauf (allegedly killed by a drone strike in November, 2008). These reports appear to be post-operational assessments of the July 7, 2005 London bombings, the failed July 21, 2005 attacks on the London Underground and the 2006 “Airlines plot” to bring down around eight airliners on transatlantic routes.

Ocak and Lodin left Pakistan in early 2011, travelling via Iran and Turkey to Budapest where they were apparently tasked with raising funds and establishing networks of suicide bombers that could be used in future al-Qaeda operations (*Die Tageszeitung*, January 25). However, both operatives were captured together with a network of Austrian recruits, some of whom were believed to have sought flight training (*Der Spiegel*, June 18, 2011).

## Conclusion

What is most interesting about both cases is the transfer of the German cells from the IMU and DTM to core al-Qaeda. In both cases, the German speakers seem to have first been drawn in using the IMU/DTM networks that are in themselves off-shoots of Central Asian networks, but ended up as part of the al-Qaeda network, tasked with carrying out terrorist attacks in Europe.

According to Siddiqui, however, this was contrary to their original intentions: “We wanted to fly [to Pakistan] to live life according to Shari’a law and fight jihad....we did not want to ever return” (AP, March 20). Similarly, Ocak seems to have enjoyed fighting the United States alongside the DTM members and their Central Asian associates. However, the men were easily turned from their Central Asian focus back towards the West, al-Qaeda’s priority interest.

There are still a number of uncertainties surrounding these two cases. In particular, it is unclear whether the two groups interacted or were kept apart. Given their similar interactions with al-Mauretani and orders to head back to Europe to establish new networks, it seems as though they might have been part of a bigger scheme, explaining why al-Qaeda would have wanted to keep them apart. While a number of other cells have been disrupted in Germany of late, it remains unclear how many more might be out there. Nevertheless, these trials show that the interaction between Central Asian

terror groups in Waziristan, their German recruits and al-Qaeda is somewhat less organized than it appears at the outset and is highly influenced by the actions of individual personalities on the ground.

Far from being an organized targeting of Germany by al-Qaeda, the activities of these cells were instead an opportunistic effort that reflected the presence of numerous itinerant young Germans in Waziristan in 2009. In a pattern seen previously with the British-Pakistani connection in the lead-up to the July 7, 2005 bombings, young men fired up by parochial jihadist groups are drawn toward al-Qaeda’s globalist message prior to returning home to carry out attacks there.

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## Notes:

1. <http://ojihad.wordpress.com/2010/10/22/why-the-hamburg-friends-matter-jihad-made-in-germany/>.
2. “Mein Weg nach Jannah,” by Abdul Ghaffar el Almani (Eric Breininger), released on forums May 2010. A translation summary can be found at: <http://www.jihadica.com/guest-post-the-story-of-eric-breininger/>.