

TRANSNATIONAL THREATS UPDATE

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“Globalization has broadened the number of threats and challenges facing the United States ... The nation requires more from our Intelligence Community than ever before and consequently we need to do our business better, both internally, through greater collaboration across disciplines and externally, by engaging more of the expertise available outside the Intelligence Community.”

—The Honorable J. Michael McConnell, Director of National Intelligence, Statement for the Record to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, February 27, 2008

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Terrorism

Attacks Targeting South Koreans in Yemen

Two terrorist attacks targeting South Koreans in Yemen in a single week highlight the volatility of Yemen’s security arena and the threats facing foreigners in the country. Four South Korean tourists and at least one Yemeni were killed in a suicide attack near the city of Shibam, a UN World Heritage site. Although it was initially uncertain whether the incident was a terrorist attack or the result of dynamite from a nearby mine, it is now clear that a local teenager approached the Korean tourists and detonated a bomb while posing for pictures with them. Two days later, a second suicide bomber struck a convoy carrying South Korean officials who had been sent to Yemen to investigate the first bombing.

The second attack was well coordinated and specifically designed to target South Koreans. The bomber, the only casualty, walked between two cars in the Korean convoy as it was driving to the airport in Sanaa and detonated an explosive device. Although no one was hurt, the second attack indicates that South Koreans are being targeted by terrorist groups in Yemen. In late March, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula claimed responsibility for the attacks, citing South Korea’s involvement in the United States’ “war on terror.” These two suicide bombings were the

worst attacks on South Koreans since 2007, when 23 aid workers were taken hostage by members of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

South Korea’s foreign policy makes them a plausible target of terrorist attacks—having once had the third-largest contingent of foreign troops in Iraq and a small contingent in Afghanistan. Additionally, in the summer of 2008, South Korea launched the Korea-Arab Society, an organization aimed at expanding ties between South Korea and the Middle East, with 22 Arab nations. The Korea-Arab Society seeks to improve economic, social, and cultural exchanges between South Korea and the Arab countries and has increased the country’s visibility in the region.

South Korea and Yemen enjoy strong bilateral relations. South Korea serves as a valuable export market for Yemeni commodities, is involved in several oil exploration projects, and is a major aid donor. Since 1991, South Korea has sent more than \$4 million in aid to Yemen. More recently, South Korea pledged \$100 million in bilateral assistance to Yemen at the 2006 London donor conference. A plan for South Korea to begin importing natural gas from Yemen in June of this year may also provide incentive for Yemeni terrorists to target Korean nationals.

Hamas Cracking Down on Unauthorized Rockets

Since Israel’s three-week incursion into Gaza ended on January 18, approximately 176 rockets have been launched into southern Israel from the Gaza Strip. In a surprising move, Hamas officials condemned the rocket attacks and denied responsibility. A statement from the Interior Ministry of Gaza said that the rockets “are not being fired by the resistance faction” and are “being fired at the wrong

time.” Additionally, the statement said that security forces are investigating the attacks and will find the responsible parties.

According to a senior commander in the Islamic Jihad al-Quds Brigade, Hamas had arrested 10 terrorists, including the group’s senior field commander, for firing unauthorized rockets at Israel. According to reports, Hamas members threatened the 10 individuals and demanded that they stop firing rockets. The individuals were released after promising to comply with Hamas’s demands. According to a Kuwaiti paper, after this arrest, Hamas held a meeting with representatives from Islamic Jihad demanding the cessation of rocket attacks on Israel. This criticism comes amid reconciliation talks between Hamas and Fatah in Cairo. Some analysts believe that Hamas fears that the continuation of rocket fire could disrupt the negotiations.

Al Qaeda’s Recruiting Manual Found Online

Researchers at West Point recently found a 51-page al Qaeda recruiting manual on Ecles, a jihadi chat room. The manual, *The Art of Recruiting Mujahedeen*, which was written by Abu Amr al-Qaidi, appears to have first appeared on jihadi Web sites in summer 2008. The manual offers step-by-step instructions for less-skilled recruiters that operate independently on how to recruit individuals into the global jihadist movement. One analyst described the manual as “terrorism for dummies,” as the recruiter does not have to use his own judgment but rather follow the instructions provided.

According to the manual, the first step in recruiting potential terrorists is to build good rapport with the recruit. This stage, requiring the recruiter to identify the recruit’s interests and relationships, and even buying him gifts, should last approximately three weeks. During this period, the recruiter should monitor the recruit to uncover how he spends an entire 24-hour period, so as to reassure the recruiter of his choice. This first section is followed by a questionnaire for the recruiter to assess his progress—the recruiter’s progress is judged by the score received. If a recruiter receives less than 10 points, the manual instructs him to repeat the stages; if he receives higher than 10 points, the recruiter has been successful. The manual also contains a long list of recommended texts, audiotapes, and video clips, and recommends subjects of discussion that will ease the recruit into the idea of jihad—it recommends discussing the issue of Palestine first because it is “an issue on which there is no disagreement.” Furthermore, the manual encourages that the recruiter not mention al Qaeda until the recruit is eager to join the cause because it is likely he will have been exposed to negative media portrayals of the group. Al-Qaidi suggests that recruiters

focus on the nonreligious and attempt to keep recruits in their country of origin, which will make them harder to find.

Analysts disagree on the manual’s significance—some believe it indicates that al Qaeda is attempting to identify new recruits for sleeper cells, while others believe its simplicity suggests that al Qaeda is desperate for new members. Analysts do agree, however, that the manual offers important insight into the organization and into the desired characteristics of recruits. According to counterterrorism expert Bruce Hoffman, “they are hoping to create the ultimate fifth column, or a sleeper that really is unknown, is undetectable and is beneath the radar and in place in precisely the enemy territory where al-Qaida wishes to strike.” Researchers do not know how many people have downloaded the manual, but they note that the Web site is the second most popular jihadi chat room on the Web.

Al Shabaab, Al Qaeda, and Homegrown Terror

In recent weeks, there have been several new developments regarding Somalia, missing Somali-American youth, and the threat of homegrown terrorism in the United States. U.S. counterterrorism experts are becoming increasingly concerned about the situation in Somalia due the strengthening of al Shabaab, a radical Islamic group with ties to al Qaeda. According to Philip Mudd, associate executive assistant director of the national security branch of the FBI, “Al-Shabaab has links to the al-Qa’ida in East Africa network—including individuals responsible for the 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania—and maintains ties with al-Qa’ida leaders in Pakistan’s Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA).” Senior al Shabaab leaders have confirmed these ties.

A series of three messages released by al Qaeda’s senior leadership in the form of audiotapes, one of which was a personal message recorded by Osama bin Laden, appear to bolster the claims that there are strong ties between al Shabaab and al Qaeda. In a video released on February 13, Abu Yahya al Libi, a senior al Qaeda spokesman and religious leader, called for Somalis to fight the government of President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed. In another video released toward the end of February, Ayman al Zawahiri, al Qaeda’s second in command, praised al Shabaab and proclaimed that gains made by the organization were “a step on the path of victory of Islam.” Finally, in an audio message entitled “Fight on, Champions of Somalia” released in mid-March, bin Laden reiterated the need to overthrow President Ahmed, saying he should be “dethroned, fought and removed with armed force.” These messages indicate that al Qaeda may view Somalia as a

potential recruiting, training, or staging ground for operations in the region and around the globe.

The threat of a failed state used as a base for terrorist organizations is reminiscent of Afghanistan prior to the U.S. invasion in 2001. Somalia, however, poses a greater threat to the United States due to the large Somali immigrant community in the country, and the opportunity to recruit homegrown terrorists. The ethnic Somali community in the United States is estimated to range from 150,000 to 200,000. Several cities in the United States are home to large populations of ethnic Somalis, including Minneapolis, Minnesota; Columbus, Ohio; Seattle, Washington; Washington, D.C.; San Diego, California; and Atlanta, Georgia. As discussed in last month's issue, the threat of terrorism from Somali-Americans has received considerable attention in recent months due to the disappearance of several Somali-American youth who reappeared as combatants in Somalia. According to Philip Mudd, the number of individuals who have traveled to Somalia to train or fight on behalf of al Shabaab, "is comparatively larger than the number of individuals who have left the United States for other conflict zones around the world over the past few years."

In a hearing before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Andrew Liepman, deputy director of intelligence at the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), attempted to explain why Somali-Americans were at a higher risk for being recruited by al Shabaab. According to Liepman, many Somali immigrants receive less language and cultural training and education prior to migration than other Muslim immigrants to the United States. This lack of education has resulted in the relative isolation of the Somali community. Additionally, "the Somali-American population suffers the highest unemployment rate among East African diaspora communities in the United States, and experience significantly high poverty rates and the lowest rate of college graduation." These conditions tend to make individuals within the community more susceptible to being recruited by extremists offering new opportunities and capitalizing on the tensions between their traditional and adopted cultures—this seems to be the case for the young Somali men that disappeared from Minneapolis at the end of 2008.

Recent reports indicate that the threat of terrorism recruitment in the United States is not isolated to Minneapolis. Several government agencies have focused on additional activities in Columbus, Ohio. In Columbus, like in Minneapolis, the NCTC Global Engagement Group chairs the Somali Community Outreach Forum, which provides a forum to coordinate community outreach meetings. The Department of Homeland Security Office

for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties similarly sponsors roundtable discussions that are designed to bring U.S. government officials and community members together. There are plans to expand both of these programs to other cities with large Somali populations.

In addition to the activities aimed at enhancing the trust and relationship between the Somali community and the U.S. government, the FBI is conducting investigations on terrorist recruitment in both Minneapolis and San Diego. In San Diego, the FBI is conducting a grand jury investigation of Islamist extremists suspected of recruiting Somali-American youth to attend a terrorist training camp in the Middle East and return to launch attacks on the United States. The FBI began this investigation after reports indicated that Somali youths were disappearing from their homes in Minneapolis. Recent reports have indicated that at least one of the missing Somali youths has returned to his home in Minneapolis after having traveled to Somalia. If these reports are accurate, the FBI should be able to gain valuable information pertaining to the recruitment of Somali youth in both Minneapolis and throughout Somali communities in the United States, as well as insight into the intentions of organizations operating within the country.

Regional Security Threats

Drugs and the Reemergence of the Shining Path

The drug war has spread to Peru, where Mexican and Colombian cartels declared war over the control of drugs. According to reports from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, the Sinaloa cartel of Mexico controls more than 80 percent of the drugs processed in the Apurimac-Ene River valleys (VRAE), which is one of the largest coca leaf and cocaine production zones in Peru. Reports indicate that the Mexican cartels recruited Colombians to assemble and stockpile drugs until the end of 2007; the connection ended in 2008.

The Shining Path, a Maoist guerilla group founded by Abimael Guzman in the mid-1980s and said to have been defeated by the Peruvian government in 2000, has also allegedly become involved in drug production and trade. Recently, Peru has experienced a wave of violence generally attributed to the reemergence of the group. The war against the Shining Path, which lasted from 1980 until 2000, resulted in nearly 70,000 deaths. It appears that the recent increase in drug production in Peru has contributed to their reemergence and the renewed violence in the country. During the past three months, 20 people were murdered by gunmen in the Alto Huallaga, a coca leaf and cocaine production zone in Peru where remnants of the Shining Path operate. A prosecutor from the region said

that even during the Shining Path's height, there had not been as many killings in such a short time.

Peruvian officials and analysts worry that the Shining Path has transformed itself into a drug cartel similar to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and many believe its role in drug trafficking has caused the rise of violence in the interior of Peru. In 2008, Peruvian coca cultivation increased by 4 percent for a second straight year. In 2007, it was estimated that about 290 tons of cocaine were produced in Peru, second only to Colombia. The Shining Path has found this to be a useful resource and is believed to be involved in protecting drug smugglers, extorting taxes from farmers, and operating its own cocaine laboratories.

The reemergence of the Shining Path has also presented a problem for Bolivian security. Bolivian police sources have claimed that the Shining Path is using armed robberies in Bolivia to finance their reorganization in Peru. A Bolivian police chief believes that the operations began at least two years ago and hint at the group's reorganization. Another police chief indicated that Bolivian intelligence is no match for the organization, nor is private security posted outside of private institutions, because those committing the crimes "have had rigorous training."

Instability in Egypt: A Return to Violence?

A number of developments in recent weeks suggest that Egypt may be stumbling down a dangerous path. Increasing concern over the future of the country's political stability and a recent spate of violent attacks are creating a combustible environment that may propel Egypt into an unstable future. Resentment toward the current president, Hosni Mubarak, is widespread and rising. According to the September 2008 *Economist*, "it takes little imagination to conjure up an Islamic-tinged revolution sweeping away the autocratic state created in the wake of Egypt's last big dynastic upheaval, the officers' coup of July 1952 that overthrew King Farouk."

Although the current regime is durable and has overcome repeated hardships, it appears as if it will be forced to face and withstand new challenges. Some analysts question the general future of the regime, as Mubarak is aging and lacks a clear successor. This uncertainty has the potential to provide an opening for rising opposition movements. Additionally, during the past year, Egypt has seen the regular eruption of spontaneous protests, ranging from factory strikes to land disputes to riots over food prices. Although the government has dealt effectively with some of these challenges through a combination of wage

increases and promises of widening state subsidies, other dissidents have been silenced by brutal police action.

While generally effective at silencing protestors, there has been some resistance against the police for their brutality. In early March, several Egyptian army cadets in plain clothes stormed a Cairo police station. They were filmed pelting the police station with stones and attempting to overturn a car belonging to the chief district police officer. The cadets were reportedly taking revenge for the alleged abuse of one of their colleagues by the police. The army ordered area media outlets, which are routinely censored, not to publish any details of the incident. This incident is but one example of the chaos and anger emerging in Egypt.

In addition to the political challenges facing the regime, it is also dealing with the possibility of a resurgence of terrorism. In the late 1990s, there was a large wave of terrorist attacks targeting tourism, a vital industry that currently brings in approximately \$11 billion in revenue annually.

During the past month, there were three incidents targeting tourists. In late February, a bombing in Cairo's Khan al-Khalili market, a known tourist attraction, left one French tourist dead and injured more than 20 local and foreign bystanders. Although no group claimed responsibility for this attack, Egyptian authorities blamed a small terrorist cell—possibly without ties to any foreign organizations—determined to act against the state. A few days later, an Egyptian man attacked an American teacher living and working in Egypt with a knife in the same market. According to Egyptian authorities, the act was inspired by the individual's hatred of foreigners and the Israeli offensive in Gaza. Two weeks later, Egyptian security forces evacuated a Cairo hotel after being told a bomb had been planted there. Although no bomb was found, it is clear that the threat was intended to terrorize foreign tourists.

Some analysts believe that this current wave of violence represents anger among Egyptian citizens at the way in which the Mubarak government dealt with the Israeli invasion of Gaza in December, and many believe that Egypt actively conspired with the Israelis against the Palestinians. Thus, it is possible that these attacks and threats represent only the beginning of a campaign of violence. Recent videos by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri call for Muslims to rise up and retaliate on behalf of the Palestinians. In these videos, both individuals singled out Egypt for its refusal to open its border with Gaza to allow Palestinians entry into Egypt. It is possible that these videos will inspire increased action against the Egyptian government. The attacks signal strong

disapproval of the Mubarak regime and a desire, however small, within Egypt for change. Already facing a number of significant challenges, a fresh militant campaign, executed by al Qaeda or indigenous networks, targeting the government and tourist industry could overwhelm institutions and undermine Mubarak's regime.

Unrest in Dagestan

Since 2003, hundreds of local and federal security personnel, administrators, politicians, ministers, and journalists have been killed in the Russian republic of Dagestan. Analysts attribute much of the violence to Shariat Jamaat, a militant Islamist organization that appears to be gaining strength in the region. Some analysts claim that the situation in Dagestan is similar to other areas in the northern Caucasus, especially Chechnya, but Dagestan differs because the public does not support the idea of secession. In recent months, violence against local authorities, primarily the law enforcement agencies led by Dagestani interior minister General Lieutenant Adilgirei Magomedtagirov, has increased, leading some to question their level of control over the situation on the ground.

The local authorities are becoming increasingly worried about the situation in Dagestan, along with the rest of the northern Caucasus, due to their inability to destabilize the resistance movements with arrests and other operations. This fear is substantiated by a statement issued by Sharia Jamaat on March 5 in response to an attack in Dagestan's capital. The statement acknowledges that although their plans were foiled, they were able to kill or wound several dozen law enforcement officials. In the statement, the organization claims that they are training youth in the forests and mountains of Dagestan and urges young people not to seek them out, indicating that there are plenty of recruits and, perhaps, that they have a network throughout the republic.

Sharia Jamaat is only one of the armed groups operating in Dagestan. In mid-March, the Interior Ministry announced the commencement of a two-month hunt for rebels in the republic. The operation is centered on the village of Gubden in the Karabudakhkentskiy district of Dagestan. Federal police believe the village is a stronghold of a rebel group that is led by Magomedali Vagabov, who is wanted by the authorities. The Dagestani Interior Ministry's press service has said, "The main goal [of the operation] is the total neutralization of the sabotage-terrorist group led by Magomedali Vagabov." Although the situation in Dagestan does appear to be escalating, it is not surprising as it represents the situation in the northern Caucasus in general. This region is characterized by interethnic and religious conflict. In response to the violence, the republics' security forces, often with assistance from

federal forces, frequently launch special operations that result in more bloodshed.

Human Trafficking

Israel Busts Human Trafficking Ring

In early March, police in Tel Aviv arrested 12 members of a human-trafficking network suspected of being the largest in Israel and one of the largest in Europe. The arrests followed a two-year international investigation and coincided with the arrest of at least 13 additional suspects by Russian and Ukrainian authorities. Last year, a joint operation by the Israeli and Russian police resulted in the arrest of 13 Israelis and Russians suspected of involvement in the same trafficking ring. The ring is suspected of smuggling at least 2,000 women from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and Uzbekistan into Israel, Cyprus, and eventually Belgium and England.

Most of the trafficked women came from impoverished villages and were allured by promises of employment as dancers and waitresses in Israeli clubs. Women who refused the employment opportunity were allegedly assaulted and smuggled into Israel against their will via Egypt or Turkey. Testimonies collected by NGO workers allege that the women trafficked through Egypt had been brought by Bedouin smugglers who often raped and abused them. On the Egyptian-Israeli border, many of the human-, arms-, and drug-trafficking incidents involve Bedouins. Once in Israel, the women were forced to work without pay until their purchasing price was paid off. The women spoke of mistreatment if they refused to work in the sex industry or under those conditions. The suspected leader of the ring, Jacky Yazady, was not arrested and, as of mid-March, Tel Aviv police are still searching for him.

In 2008, the Tel Aviv police shut down 71 suspected brothels, an increase from 20 in 2007. A 2009 report published by the UN Office of Drugs and Crime, titled *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, said that Israel, Turkey, and Thailand are "ranked very high in the citation index as destination countries in the global comparison." According to the U.S. State Department's *Trafficking in Persons Report 2008*, "The Government of Israel does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so."

Maritime Security

Piracy in Latin America Increasing

A recent piracy threat assessment performed by AKE Intelligence has shown that in February there was a rise in maritime criminal incidents occurring off the Pacific Coast of Latin America. The assessment shows that the Pacific Coast of Latin America accounted for around 10 percent of all piracy incidents that occurred from January until the end of February 2009. During the same time period in 2008, the region accounted for only 6 percent of all global piracy attacks.

Almost all of the attacks this year have occurred in and around Callao, a Peruvian harbor. Rather than the seizing and hijacking of ships as we see in attacks off of the coast of Somalia, pirates in Callao generally attempt to gain access to anchored vessels in order to steal goods, equipment, and personal belongings off of the ships. While analysts worry about the possible targeting of more portable cargo, they are more concerned with the risks posed to crew members by criminals armed with firearms or knives. Analysts are also worried about the threat of kidnapping, as future victims in Peru could be extracted from their vessel and held on land until negotiations proceed, which is unlikely to occur off of the coast of Somalia.

According to the International Maritime Bureau's *Report on Acts of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships*, Peru accounted for little more than 2 percent of all pirate attacks in 2007, with 6 total attacks out of 263 worldwide and 21 in Latin America. In 2006, Peru accounted for about 4 percent of all pirate attacks with a total of 9 attacks out of 239 worldwide and 29 in Latin America. From AKE's piracy threat assessment, it seems likely that this number will be higher in 2009.

This update is produced by the Transnational Threats Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and provides monthly news on terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crime, money laundering, and other transnational threats. The *TNT Update* draws primarily on international media sources, including the Associated Press, ITAR-TASS, Agence France Presse, Reuters, Xinhua News Agency, World Tribune, Afghan News, and others.

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