

TRANSNATIONAL THREATS UPDATE

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“We know that the nation requires more from our Intelligence Community than ever before because America confronts a greater diversity of threats and challenges than ever before. Globalization...does facilitate the terrorist threat, heightens the danger of WMD proliferation, and contributes to regional instability and reconfigurations of power and influence.”

—The Honorable John D. Negroponte, Former Director of National Intelligence, Statement for the Record to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, January 11, 2007

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General McNeill has indicated that the NATO campaign is performing well, considering that it only has about one-half the manpower and a smaller fraction of supplies afforded to it than coalition forces in Iraq. Furthermore, Afghanistan is a larger country both in terms of geographic size and population than Iraq, making it incumbent on the Afghan central government to take the reins of their country’s situation. The past two years have been deadly, as militants have increased their use of suicide attacks on security personnel and Afghan civilians. May 2008 has been a bloodier month than usual, as Pakistan’s recent negotiation of a ceasefire with Taliban forces in its Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) has eased pressure for the Taliban and allowed them to go on the offensive. However, General McNeill predicted that there will soon be a lull in militant activity, as Pakistan will resume its military operations against insurgents.

Regional Security Threats

Weakening Afghan Insurgency Bolstered by Poppy

On May 29, U.S. General Dan McNeill, the commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan, stated that although the war against insurgents is progressing fairly well, opium and heroin sales provide the insurgents with significant funding. He reinforced this by equating the insurgency with the drug trade in many of the southern parts of the country, especially Helmand Province. Accordingly, the Afghan government under President Hamid Karzai needs to step up its counternarcotics efforts if it aims to put an end to fighting. Drug trafficking is one of the major corruptive threats, as it challenges efforts to promote good governance by undermining governmental responsibility. General McNeill estimates that between 20 percent and 40 percent of the insurgents’ funding comes from the lucrative Afghan poppy. The country is the source of about 93 percent of the world’s supply of opium, and a record 8,200 tons were produced during 2007, valued at \$4 billion. So far, the Afghan government has declined to increase its operations to physically eradicate poppy fields, maintaining that its efforts to dissuade growers have been effective.

Altogether, around 70,000 NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and U.S. troops are helping the Afghan military put down an insurrection that killed a total of 8,000 people in 2007 alone. Improved coordination between Afghan forces and ISAF has enabled ISAF to fine-tune its attacks on militants. On May 28, Zahir Tanin, Afghanistan’s ambassador to the United Nations, stated before the UN Security Council that civilian casualties in the country have decreased perceptibly. Smaller bombs, better operational planning, and fewer but more precise airstrikes are having a powerful effect in increasing the effectiveness of antiterrorism efforts. On May 28, the targeted bombing of a fortification in the district of Bala Buluk killed 30 Taliban members, including several unit commanders. *(Combined dispatches)*

Violence Flares Up in Sudan

Fighting escalated in Sudan, making the possibility of a return to civil war seem likely to critics. While most of the

violence is now occurring between the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the government of Sudan's armed forces, other rebel groups are contributing to the chaos. The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), which routinely kidnaps civilians, initiated the resurgence in fighting on May 10 when it attacked Omdurman, a suburb of the capital Khartoum. The Sudanese government estimated that more than 300 heavily armed vehicles were used by the JEM in their blitzkrieg and that hundreds of people died in the attack. Sudan continues to maintain that the Chadian government is intentionally trying to increase instability in the Darfur region and attempting to undermine Sudan. Accordingly, it ascribes the brutal attack on its capital to the government of Chad, which denied involvement with the JEM.

The fighting, which killed more than 200, has induced Sudan to call for the international community to consider the JEM to be a terrorist organization. Additionally, the government has responded to the violence by engaging in mass arrests and several public executions in an attempt to crack down on JEM membership. These actions have drawn strong criticism from human rights groups that are worried that the government is abusing its power through wide-scale jailing and torturing of dissidents. Already bearing the label of genocide, the five-year-long conflict between the Sudanese government and rebels has taken the lives of perhaps 300,000 persons and created 2.5 million refugees in Darfur. The United Nations reports that this escalation in violence has hindered its humanitarian operations to provide food and aid within the region. (*Combined dispatches*)

Energy Security

Oil Worker Abductions in the Niger Delta

The oil-rich Niger Delta has seen a constant string of violence in the past quarter century aimed at threatening the safety of its petroleum industry. Nonviolent but disruptive protests and acts of industrial sabotage were common for most of this period. However, since January 2006, actions by militant groups have become the most visible form of expressing popular discontent with what is perceived as the government's appropriation of natural resources. For the last two and a half years, militant groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta have engaged in a series of kidnappings and killings of oil workers. As Africa's largest oil producer, Nigeria's ability to protect those employed in the industry is paramount. Thus, the prominent campaign of kidnapping oil workers has significantly hobbled the nation's ability to produce, and it has lost over 25 percent of capability. The industry also has experienced losses due to criminals who siphon from oil pipelines. Many analysts believe that while the contribution of Nigeria to the international oil supply is

relatively small, it is great enough for its energy security problems to have had a notable impact on driving up global prices. Nigeria is the United States' sixth-largest supplier of oil, as the United States imports over 60 percent of Nigeria's oil production every day.

More than 200 oil workers have been kidnapped since January 2006, and companies have taken to increasing security measures for their employees. Owing to this, militant groups have recently begun to shift their focus toward softer and more salient targets. Prominent politicians, public figures, and businessmen are now being kidnapped in order to fulfill the broader strategy of discouraging foreign companies from engaging in oil exploitation. On May 7, John Iruke, the chairman of education of Abia, one of Nigeria's states, and Celestine Ogobiwu, a legislator from the state of Imo, were kidnapped for ransom. Although Ogobiwu was released two days later, several other prominent civil servants are still captives, and the wave of oil worker kidnappings is unlikely to have drawn to a close. Militant groups have found a very lucrative and simultaneously disruptive strategy. To effectively combat this threat, the government must obtain the general approval of its population. Public discontent is quite high, as there is general antipathy toward the pollution, corruption, and poverty that have emerged from the government's single-minded attempts to develop its oil industry at the cost of most others. Additionally, the government response has been generally indiscriminate and violent, resulting in increasing public dissatisfaction for the collateral deaths of thousands of civilians. (*Combined dispatches*)

Drug Trafficking

Drug Smugglers and Submarines

The arms race competition between drug traffickers and law enforcement agencies has seen the emergence of a new evasion technology: submarines. It appears that Colombian smugglers have pioneered the development of fully submersible private ships that are able to carry large cargo loads. Previous generations of submarines used by smugglers offered less control, range, and storage space. Even as early as the 1990s, smugglers such as Pablo Escobar had taken to trying to utilize submarines to transport contraband. Beginning in the mid-1990s, law enforcement personnel captured several rather primitive crafts. But the relative success of recent raids demonstrates an increase both in the numbers and quality of submarines used by smugglers. In March, numerous subs in various stages of construction and materials were seized at eight construction sites by Colombian authorities. Naval experts have judged that this new class of ships can carry perhaps more than 12 tons of contraband and is capable of traveling over 3,000 kilometers submerged, without needing to refuel.

Drug runners using the subs likely ship their cargo from Colombia to Mexico, from where it eventually ends up in the United States. These submarines represent the next cycle in the war against drugs, as contraband can be transported beneath the waves and can elude detection by maritime authorities who are accustomed to dealing with speedboats and small airplanes. Also notable is that drug dealers have grown so efficient at building these subs that they are estimated to cost only around \$1 million, an investment that is easily recovered many times over after a successful trafficking mission. They are also so small that they are constructable in approximately 45 days and leave virtually no wake, making their detection by counternarcotics units nearly impossible. The efficiency with which drug suppliers can now deliver their contraband will likely prove an unpleasant development for counternarcotics agencies. (*Combined dispatches*)

Drugs Proliferate in Ukraine

Ukraine is a prime transit country for international drug smugglers, who use it as a waypoint for traveling between Russia and Western Europe. Generally, processed drugs are shipped east from Europe, and opium and its derivatives head west from their origins in Afghanistan. As a result, Ukraine is suffering immensely from frequent drug traffic, and many segments of its population are beginning to become addicts. Ukrainian police believe they have uncovered a new international drug-trafficking channel after arresting a driver in Lviv on May 5. Several other arrests were made simultaneously in Poland after law enforcement in both countries cooperated to seize a large shipment of heroin, 17.5 kilos, valued at approximately \$2 million. Near Kharkiv on May 8, Ukrainian police arrested the Turkish driver of a truck laden with 142 kilos of cocaine, worth between \$6 million and \$14 million. But this amount pales in comparison with the large raid on July 23, 2007, when Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) agents confiscated 174 kilos of heroin in Illichevsk.

Although such great arrests reflect an increased willingness of the SBU to collaborate with U.S., Turkish, and other foreign counternarcotics agencies, it also highlights the rapid growth in drug trafficking within the nation. The 460 kilograms of heroin seized by the government in 2007 is almost as much as the amount captured by the government within the previous two decades, according to publicly released government statistics. Despite the SBU's best efforts, their closing of a dozen or so trafficking channels has only made a small impact in hindering drug smuggling through the country; the most optimistic estimates say that less than 30 percent of all traffic is seized, and the actual number is likely closer to 5 percent or even 2 percent. For example, in 2001 Ukraine was able to seize only 12 kilos of heroin, although the amount that was trafficked

through the country was between 9 and 20 metric tons. Even assuming a disproportionate increase in the ability of the SBU to capture smugglers over the past few years, there is no denying the ubiquity of heroin and cocaine.

Social costs run high for these two drugs. AIDS infections are mostly concentrated among heroin users. Many sex-trade workers are addicts, and vice versa. Drug proliferation also engenders small-scale violence amongst individuals. Organized crime has risen and branched out into other contraband: weapons and humans. And the spread of successful syndicates creates opportunities for organized violence. While Ukraine is fortunate so far in this regard, it sees occasional gang slayings. Ukrainian police are beginning an investigation into the assassination of a criminal leader named Tengiz Karchava, who was killed on May 10 in Odessa. Karchava was a key member in a ring run by a man known as Antimos, involved in directing many of the trafficking channels passing through Ukraine.

(*Combined dispatches*)

Cyber Security

DARPA Creating Cyber Laboratory

The U.S. government recently authorized the creation of a new top secret program that has drawn comparisons to the Manhattan Project and the Space Race, begun in 1957 with the launch of the Soviet Union's Sputnik. The Space Race was the event that created the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), and now the agency is being tasked with perhaps what shall prove its greatest challenge: a National Cyber Range, a virtual laboratory and testing site for government efforts researching cyber warfare. Numerous security experts note that the information age has accelerated the transfer of power from states to small organizations and individuals, and as a result, cyber warfare is the next frontier of challenges that governments will face.

While details about the new DARPA mandate are hard to come by, the agency has made public its broad agency announcement (BAA), entitled *National Cyber Range*, which was published on May 5. In this document, DARPA states that its primary mission is to ascertain current threat levels posed by computer networks to the United States and to create defensive countermeasures to these. Transforming the insights gained from this research into developing offensive cyber weapons is an unstated but reasonable extrapolation of what the government is also intending to do. DARPA's aim of engaging in "multiple, independent, simultaneous experiments, on the same infrastructure" means that its project includes the creation of a mock Internet, one that presumably mirrors its capabilities as accurately as possible.

Those in favor of the initiative cite its necessity because of the increase in technical capabilities for hackers to employ distributed denial-of-service attacks to potentially strike at infrastructural, military, and financial networks. But critics worry that the government's attempt at obtaining security will come at a cost of engaging in wholesale data mining and the loss of personal privacy. They contend that the U.S. government is overstating the threats posed by cyber criminals and government-sponsored hackers. Others counter that, like the development of the Internet from DARPA's Arpanet prototype, government research will eventually engender the creation of new private technology applications.

Also of concern is the necessity for this project to engage in metasecurity. Hackers, especially Chinese ones, are adroit at pilfering sensitive information, and more than ever before, this research will have to be secured from international espionage. The future of espionage, cyber security, computer networks, and perhaps even warfare itself may get their beginnings in DARPA's newest project. (*Combined dispatches*)

Transnational Crime

Gangs: Criminal Enterprises, Militias, and Police

Increasingly, the boundaries between subnational and international threats are being blurred. *Foreign Policy* recently reported that urban gangs are increasingly not just local criminal enterprises, but insidious and powerful entities that threaten to undermine the legitimacy of governments. Gangs are ubiquitous and affect significant regions throughout the world, whether in Africa, the Americas, or Asia. Some of the more powerful gangs are practically de facto governments in areas where even the federal government cannot exert control. For example, the Mungiki gang in Kenya has wielded force so well that it is effectively the management for public infrastructure. Mungiki is believed to have upwards of 100,000 members, making it more of an army than the small group that is normally entailed by the term "gang." Claiming to represent the needs and desires of the Kikuyu, Kenya's largest ethnic group, Mungiki was behind most of the violence that has plagued the country since the recently disputed election of December 27. Even for months before the election, the gang ran a terror campaign that included brazenly beheading and dismembering people in order to dissuade them from voting against their candidate. Mungiki, whose members are rumored to drink and bathe in human blood, combines aspects of criminal racketeering, a militia, a police force, a religious group, a secret society, a political party, and a provider of social services. The Kenyan government has proven ineffective at providing security for its ethnic minorities by dealing with Mungiki's violence. Rival gangs have arisen under the mantle of protecting these

minorities, although they are just as feared as Mungiki for their ruthlessness and propensity for largely indiscriminate violence. One of the more prominent of these is the interestingly named Taliban, although its members are Christians of Luo ethnicity. Numerous policy experts and humanitarian groups fear that the increasing ethnic violence in Kenya will soon spark wholesale civil war or even genocide.

Mara Salvatruchas-13, better known as MS-13, is another gang whose membership is so vast and pervasive that it resembles a transnational network of loosely bound cells more than a conventional gang. Like other gangs that are rapidly developing into mafia syndicates, MS-13 is especially renowned for its brutality and has publicly killed rival gangs, former MS-13 members, police, and even random passersby. MS-13 may be more dangerous than other gangs not only because of its size, but its leadership. It was founded by numerous Salvadorans who fled their country's civil war for California. Many of the founding cadre had paramilitary training and passed this experience on to the next generation of leadership before they were deported to various countries in Central America. In their new setting, whether in Guatemala, Honduras, or back again in El Salvador, these leaders established numerous cells that approximated the original branch of MS-13. The size of the gang is hard to measure, and while criminal experts have difficulty determining how interconnected these cells, or *maras*, are, MS-13 has spread to major cities in the United States and throughout Central and South America. The pervasiveness of MS-13 exemplifies how local ethnic conflict can rapidly evolve into regional and transnational crime and violence.

The Taiwanese gang Zhu Lien Bang, or United Bamboo, provides an archetype of how international organized crime is now branching to fill virtually every niche of illegal activities. In addition to supporting itself financially through providing diverse trafficking services—arms, drugs, and humans—United Bamboo has proven effective at social networking. It enjoys connections with the Japanese Yakuza and with various Chinese triads and is rumored to have illicit ties to the Kuomintang (KMT), or the Chinese Nationalist Party. Although the gang is smaller in membership and keeps a far lower profile than other criminal organizations, such as the showy Yakuza, it is no less of a threat. It has engaged in numerous targeted killings of dissidents, even abroad, and is considered to be the violent arm of the KMT. The most notable instance of this willingness to assassinate even foreign citizens occurred when journalist Henry Liu was murdered at his home in San Francisco. (*Combined dispatches*)

Terrorism Trends

Terrorism on the Decline?

On May 21 the United Nations released a study titled *Human Security Brief 2007*, which states that, contrary to common perceptions, terrorism is declining worldwide. The report mentions that terrorism-related deaths are decreasing even when data from Iraqi fatalities are included. And when Iraqi fatalities are excluded, then worldwide terrorist deaths have decreased by 40 percent since 2001. Terrorist attacks in Iraq account for by far the majority of terrorism-related deaths worldwide. So even as UN data indicate that terrorist fatalities in Iraq have diminished, which some say is largely due to the recent troop surge, and that globally terrorism attacks have decreased, public perception is increasingly worried about terrorism. Similarly, current estimations by American think tanks mirror this anxiety about terrorism, and policy institutes, such as the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism and the National Counterterrorism Center, maintain that global terrorism deaths have been rising over the last few years.

This controversy between the United Nations and think tanks is of profound implication for states deciding on future counterterrorism strategies. Interestingly, this new report seems to undermine the United Nations' conventional message that aggressively responding to terrorism does not work but instead incites more individuals to become terrorists. Instead, it supports the conservative conclusion that overall the United States has made significant progress in the global War on Terror. *Human Security Brief 2007* also criticizes policy institutes for being inconsistent on intentionally excluding data on civilian deaths in many places in Africa, such as Darfur, which overemphasizes the proportion of Iraqi deaths on worldwide figures. Policy institutes tend to consider civilian fatalities in Darfur as genocide, not terrorism. (*Combined dispatches*)

Terrorism

New Activities of al Qaeda Allies in Africa

Even as al Qaeda is considered by many to be losing its foothold in Iraq, the Algerian group calling itself al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is attempting to spread the infamous organization's brand into Africa. While foreign intelligence agencies are attempting to monitor AQIM, its small size makes it hard to gather accurate information. And many of the organizations it is engaging in outreach to are not yet under surveillance. While it lacks a large, hard cadre of leaders, evidence indicates that AQIM has been highly involved in training numerous other radical groups throughout the Maghreb in terrorism-related activities. As well, the al Qaeda spinoff is beginning to link up

with drug traffickers passing from west to east Africa along the Sahara. Cocaine profits especially are a prominent source of income for AQIM, and similarly increasing connections worldwide between terrorist and criminal groups worry security experts interested in curtailing terrorist funding. Bomb making chemicals are also ferried along these Saharan smuggling routes.

AQIM is not a new terrorist group, but rather an incarnation of an organization that has plagued Algeria for almost a decade. Previously known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in January 2007, AQIM renamed itself to reflect its new nexus to al Qaeda. GSPC itself is a splinter cell from the Armed Islamic Group (AIG), formed in 1998 at the end of the Algerian civil war. While AQIM is much smaller and less influential than AIG was, the group has shown a remarkable ability to engage in effective tactical operations and suicide bombings. As well, it has benefitted from utilizing the geographic vastness of the Sahara and the neighboring Sahel region to stay in motion, frustrating governmental efforts to locate AQIM's base of operations. (*Combined dispatches*)

Terrorist Bombing in Jaipur, India

On May 13, the city of Jaipur, India, was hit by nine simultaneous bomb explosions, killing dozens and injuring more than 200 persons. It is not yet clear who is responsible for the attack, although a group named Harkut-ul-Jehad-i Islami (HuJI) has taken credit. HuJI, an extremist Sunni group following the Deobandi school of Islam, was originally founded in Afghanistan in 1980 in order to counter the Soviet Army, which had invaded the country. The group, although small, has also been held accountable for similar terrorist attacks in both Hyderabad and Ajmer Dargah, which took place in 2007. Indian police have traced the attacks to a different cause: a little-known organization called the Indian Mujahideen. But it is unclear whether this is a separate entity than HuJI, as some sources say. And Indian intelligence claims that this is merely a blanket term for illegally operating groups and that it is composed of HuJI members along with those from other banned groups, such as the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). Alternatively, Indian Mujahideen is also equated with SIMI. The confusion over who is in these various terrorist groups complicates counterterrorism efforts.

These groups are known to have links with one another, as well as ties to Bangladeshi terrorist organizations. Although they have different agendas, their motivation appears to be polarizing Indian society along religious lines by pitting Hindus and Muslims against one another. This attack is especially troubling for the Indian government because Jaipur is primarily a Hindu city, devoid of any

special political symbolism. Instead, the attack was largely unexpected and potentially economically hazardous because the city is a highly regarded tourist destination. (*Combined dispatches*)

Combating Terrorism

ETA's Peña Arrested

On May 21, French and Spanish police reported the arrest of Francisco Javier López Peña and three other members of the separatist group known as Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) in Bordeaux, France. These four Spanish nationals, along with a Frenchman arrested in Bayonne, were indicted on charges of conspiracy to engage in terrorism on May 24. Peña, also known as "Thierry," is believed to be the foremost member of ETA, having inherited the position after its leader, Mikel Albizu, who was arrested in October 2004 by French police. He is also suspected of orchestrating the recent string of terrorist attacks that ended inchoate negotiations between ETA and the Spanish government in December 2006 with an attack in the Madrid International Airport.

Founded in 1959, ETA has proven its willingness to employ violence through attacking governmental buildings and assassinating political leaders in Spain. In addition to killing Francisco Franco's probable successor Luis Carrero Blanco in 1973, the group has also shown no qualms about targeting police, judges, or civilians. Accordingly, the 2004 Madrid bombings were originally pegged as caused by ETA, before evidence surfaced showing al Qaeda's involvement. By 2003, the group had softened, as its attacks had been smaller in scale and began to be preceded by warnings, intended to allow civilians to evacuate. But the population is still leery of the group, and the Spanish government's efforts to negotiate with the group have been met with protest. Over 250,000 demonstrated prior to the Spanish Parliament's June 2005 vote on whether to open official negotiations with ETA. Although it had not disarmed, in March 2006 the group made a declaration of ceasefire, but this was violated by the December 2006 attack in Madrid and formally abrogated by ETA in June 2007. (*Combined dispatches*)

FARC's Leadership Erodes

2008 may be the year of the collapse of one of the oldest continuous insurgencies in Latin America, that of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Its leadership is disintegrating as senior members are dying, quitting, or being arrested. According to an official release on May 24, FARC's founder Manuel Marulanda Vélez, also known as Tirofijo, or "sure shot," died March 26 of a heart attack. Marulanda was a charismatic leader, and his death shall assuredly alter FARC's direction and perhaps

already has done so. On May 18, Nelly Avila Moreno, known better by her nom de guerre "Karina," turned herself in to authorities. Several of her comrades surrendered themselves along with Moreno, a 24-year veteran of FARC. She claimed that surrender was a better option than being betrayed by a member of the organization eager to collect the \$2-million bounty on her, but it is likely that the recent deaths of Marulanda and other top leaders has partially demoralized FARC. On March 1, Raúl Reyes, a member of FARC's seven-person General Secretariat, was killed by the Colombian army, along with Julian Conrado, another prominent ideologue. Later that week, another member of the General Secretariat, Ivan Rios, was assassinated by his own bodyguard. And in September 2007, Negro Acacio, a prominent FARC drug financier, was killed near the border with Venezuela. Numerous other senior members, such as FARC's chief financier Simón Trinidad, have been captured alive and are imprisoned. Two more senior members were captured on May 22, creating a leadership vacuum for the organization comprising around 9,000.

Long considered a terrorist organization by Colombia and the international community, FARC has been trying to wrest power from the Colombian government for 44 years. But the loss of several of its most prestigious and charismatic leaders may cause it to change or even abandon its violent methods. Additional information delineating the organization's internal operations has been recently extracted from computer files belonging to Reyes, making it easier for counterterrorism units to trace FARC's movements. Nevertheless, many analysts have expressed reservations in presuming that FARC is ready to throw in the towel and begin disarming and releasing hostages. FARC still holds around 700 hostages, some of them prominent political figures like Ingrid Betancourt, and there are still daily altercations with Colombia's military and police forces. (*Combined dispatches*)

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, ISTAR-TASS, Agence France Presse, Reuters, Xinhua News Agency, World Tribune, Afghan News, and others.

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