

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**Jihadists in Indonesia: Where is Umar Patek?**

During the past decade, a number of high-profile terrorist bombings took place on Indonesian soil, with the 2002 attacks on Bali tourist hot spots being the most notorious example. In response, the Indonesian government created Detachment 88, a dedicated counterterrorism unit within the Indonesian national police focused primarily on cells of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the group suspected of being involved in the 2002 Bali bombings.

With Detachment 88 spearheading the law enforcement efforts, the Indonesian police have since achieved considerable successes in penetrating and eradicating JI cells. In September 2009, Noordin M. Top, a senior JI leader and expert bomb maker, was killed in a shoot-out with police. Another top JI leader, Dulmatin, was killed in Jakarta during a police raid in early March 2010. In addition to removing JI leaders, Indonesian police have arrested more than 400 suspected militants since 2002.

Despite these achievements by the Indonesian police, the persistence of other JI cells and their affiliated

splinter groups are indicative of the significant challenges of effective counterterrorism. Both Dulmatin and Umar Patek fled to the Philippines after the 2002 Bali attacks; there they were known to have worked with the al Qaeda-affiliated terrorist group Abu Sayyaf. Patek may have surreptitiously returned to Indonesia with Dulmatin; his current whereabouts are unknown.

Patek's at-large status represents an area of special concern, particularly in context with the emergence of new militant Islamic terror groups in the restive province of Banda Aceh. In a 75-minute Internet video in which they mocked the moderates of JI for having “lost the stomach for jihad,” the new self-proclaimed “al Qaeda in Aceh” group called for unity among JI members and urged them to wage jihad by force of arms. If Patek is indeed in Indonesia, Aceh could represent one of several logical areas of operation.

Aceh is known for its decades-long political insurgency against the Jakarta government, but the Acehnese practice a moderate form of Islam and have thus far resisted the radicalization that JI and other militant groups have sought to promote. With Dulmatin's death, Patek's leadership role among the JI splinter groups becomes much more prominent; if Patek is in Aceh, his presence could potentially be a force for radicalization via his recruiting acumen.

While the jihadist groups could certainly derive value from Patek being in Aceh, there is a tremendous associated risk to the groups in terms of operational security. Recent Indonesian police operations in Aceh have netted arrests of dozens of suspects as well as

quantities of firearms and false papers. Indonesian police said that the successful raid was possible because of a tip from the local Acehnese community.

Persistence of al Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula

The Interior Ministry of Saudi Arabia announced on March 24, 2010, that police had arrested 113 al Qaeda-linked militants on terrorism charges, accusing them of plotting to attack oil production facilities within the country. The vast majority of the suspects were Saudi and Yemeni (110 total); the three remaining suspects were identified as Bangladeshi, Eritrean, and Somali.

The militants were organized into three cells, according to Reuters News. Saudi law enforcement officials believe that based on evidence recovered such as weapons and explosive belts, the cells were oriented toward suicide assault on the Abqaiq complex, which is one of the world's most important petroleum processing facilities. It is believed that the police raids resulted from the investigation stemming from an October 2009 border clash at a checkpoint in southern Jazan Province.

Such an attack is consistent with al Qaeda's continued focus on high-profile targets with substantial economic value, particularly in Saudi Arabia where much of the kingdom's oil refinery and logistical infrastructure are concentrated in relatively few locations. The Abqaiq complex has been targeted before; in 2006, security forces successfully repelled an attack by militants linked to al Qaeda. Despite no physical damage being done to the facility and no reported supply disruption, news of the incident alone briefly drove up the price of oil by more than \$2 per barrel, illustrating the rationale behind al Qaeda's *modus operandi*.

Saudi counterterrorism operations are complicated by Yemen's inability to enforce its borders. Consequently, Saudi Arabia has placed greater emphasis on border security in an attempt to limit the influx of jihadists from its southern neighbor. Additional impetus was no doubt provided by the attempted suicide bomber attack, attributed to al Qaeda, on the kingdom's top counterterrorism official, Prince Mohammed bin Nayef. The assailant was a Saudi citizen who had fled to Yemen and had returned to the kingdom under the guise of a jihadist seeking to repent with the prince.

The failed assassination attempt on Prince Nayef underscores a major concern of Saudi security services; despite the large number of foreigners caught in the counterterrorism sweeps, the existence of these

networks suggests significant and persistent involvement of domestic Saudi jihadists.

Paramilitary Terror Threats in Colombia

On April 10, 2010, "Los Rastrojos" ("The Stubbles"), a drug-trafficking paramilitary group based in southwest Colombia, issued threats via e-mail and letters to more than 60 human rights organizations and activists, trade unionists, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), as well as the local United Nations Development Program office.

According to the Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement, one of the threatened NGOs in Colombia, three of the country's senators were also targeted. Los Rastrojos' missive warns the targeted groups and individuals to "leave behind subversive, archaic discussion which favors the rights and ideologies of the 'narcoterrorists,' from the Armed Revolutionary Force of Colombia (FARC) and National Liberation Army (ELN) to all their accomplices from the past and present, attacking the [national] government's good and noble intentions in favor of peace."

The text continues that unless the targeted groups cease and desist, Los Rastrojos will "go beyond threats and return to actions of the '90s [referring to a string of brutal massacres in Colombia during that time] without any mercy or fear."

Los Rastrojos, deemed by the Colombian government as one of the largest criminal groups in the country, is considered to be a legacy of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), the notorious umbrella organization of paramilitary groups that were organized ostensibly to combat leftist insurrection groups such as FARC and ELN.

In addition to being significantly involved in the drug trade, various AUC groups were linked to massacres, terrorism of local communities, and other human rights abuses during the mid- to late 1990's. In 2003, the AUC agreed to disband under the provisions of a government-sponsored ceasefire framework. Splinter groups such as Los Rastrojos are thought to have remained organized not only for narcotics-related criminal enterprises, but also as hired guns to advance the interests of local landowners and business figures.

Continued Trouble in the Caucasus

A car bomb targeting Beslan Shadiyev, a deputy interior minister of Ingushetia, exploded on April 19, 2010, in Nazran, Ingushetia's largest city. According to Russia's ITAR-Tass agency, Shadiyev was not in the car, but his driver was wounded in the attack. Less than an hour after the attack, a second bomb in a car opposite the police station exploded, wounding an investigator from the local prosecutor's office.

The attacks, attributed to a persistent insurgency, conform to the recent tactics of insurgents seeking to maximize casualties among the region's pro-Russian government, security, and law-enforcement apparatus. Two weeks prior on April 5, a suicide bomber killed two police officers in Nazran; the bomber's car later exploded, wounding another officer on the scene.

Last August, Nazran was the scene of the deadliest attack to date as a van penetrated the security perimeter of the police station and exploded, killing 24 police officers and wounding an additional 200 people.

The insurgency in this region of the North Caucasus and the neighboring region of Dagestan has targeted the Soviet/Russian presence for decades. Since the two conflicts between Chechen separatist and Russian forces in the 1990s, experts believe that elements of the insurgency in Ingushetia and Dagestan have established links with the Chechen groups, broadening the scope of the insurgency and further complicating Russian security efforts in the long-restive region.

Regional Security

Continued Factional Violence in Somalia

On March 19, 2010, Sheikh Ali Daud Hasan, a senior commander of al Shabaab, was killed as he emerged from Friday prayers in the southern Somali port city of Kismayo.

Hasan's assailants remain unidentified; there is speculation that Hizbul Islam, al Shabaab's erstwhile ally in the insurgency, was directly involved. Hizbul Islam has denied the allegations.

Al Shabaab is considered the most militant among the Islamist insurgent groups that took up arms in late 2006 against the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), the internationally recognized government of Somalia. The

TFG, even though it receives material support from the United Nations and troops from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), has a tenuous foothold in the capital city of Mogadishu and controls only a small section of territory in the war-ravaged country.

Even though al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam are nominally allied in the fight against the TFG and its affiliated militias, the presence of a common enemy has by no means kept the two groups from battling each other over a complex spectrum of issues that include their different interpretations of Islam. Al Shabaab, which embraces a radical vision of Islam akin to al Qaeda (and in fact has overtly professed links to al Qaeda), employs foreign fighters in its efforts to impose the strict administration of sharia as the basis of government. Due to these reasons, the U.S. State Department has included al Shabaab on its terrorist list. Hizbul Islam is generally organized more along lines of Somali nationalism; according to a UN High Commissioner for Refugees Integrated Regions Information Network (UNHCR-IRIN) analysis, Hizbul Islam insists that it would stop fighting if all "foreign forces" (including the AMISOM troops) leave Somalia.

These rifts have erupted into open conflict in southern Somalia, where al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam have been fighting for control of the key port city of Kismayo since September of last year. Since then, both groups' senior and local commanders have been targeted by assassins; successful attempts are often met with reciprocal killings in kind.

The key question now is how Hasan's death will affect the struggle over Kismayo and, at a broader level, whether this will substantially affect the already strained al Shabaab-Hizbul Islam alliance in Mogadishu. Developments in and around Mogadishu will be particularly interesting, as both al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam face mounting pressure from not only an impending TFG offensive in the capital city, but also an increasingly hostile civilian populace antagonized by al Shabaab's radical administration of sharia that is reminiscent of Taliban-era Afghanistan.

This current round of conflict in Somalia (since 2006) differs from previous fighting in that, according to the UNHCR-IRIN, "whereas previous struggles for power in Somalia were fought along the lines of the country's complex clan system, the current conflict is, ostensibly at least, a war between groups with different interpretations of Islam." It will be worth noting whether this dynamic holds true or whether the conflict

fractures along clan lines, particularly if the TFG offensive succeeds in retaking Mogadishu.

Ahmadinejad Views New Allies in African Countries

In a trip to Africa in the middle of April, Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's interest in the region sparked speculation. First, the Iranian president visited the near-failing state of Zimbabwe, where he was greeted warmly by President Robert Mugabe. Mugabe is known for having driven his country to the brink of economic disaster with his ill-conceived land reclamation scheme. Much like Iran, his country was hit with various sanctions from the international community in an effort to sway his domestic policy—but with little success.

It is widely speculated that Ahmadinejad came to Zimbabwe to work out a deal. UN sanctions aimed at Iran's nuclear program have severely limited Iran's sources for nuclear material. Zimbabwe, a resource-rich country, is believed to have deposits of uranium. A possible deal of uranium for oil could be the perfect marriage of convenience for two countries shunned by the international community.

Hard on the heels of his trip to Zimbabwe, Ahmadinejad dropped in on Uganda's Yoweri Museveni. Uganda is currently a rotating member of the UN Security Council, a fact that Ahmadinejad would want to leverage in the face of increased threats of tougher sanctions. Uganda, meanwhile, is eager to obtain oil-refining technology with which to exploit its reserves on Lake Albert. Museveni has not commented on whether he would support Iran against further sanctions.

TNT Update Update

In the last issue of the TNT Update, we reported on the Muslim-Christian violence that resulted in more than 300 killed in Jos, the capital of Nigeria's Plateau State.

According to a Reuters report, on April 1, 2010, Nigerian authorities arrested 20 people for their roles in "arson, terrorism, killing, maiming and possession of dangerous weapons" during the bloodshed.

There has been mounting pressure on the local government to prosecute those responsible for the incident and to impose meaningful sentences on those convicted in order to deter future religious-driven violence.

The police say that of the 162 suspects arrested in direct connection with the Jos attacks, they plan to charge 41 with "terrorism and culpable homicide," crimes that potentially carry a death sentence.

Possible Showdown in Myanmar's Shan State

The Myanmar government in Naypyidaw (capital of Myanmar since 2005) is reportedly increasing its pressure on the various armed ethnic groups inhabiting the mountainous China-Myanmar border regions to become a part of the Myanmar border force or face a possible government offensive, according to the Voice of America news service. Myanmar is scheduled to hold elections later this year, and Naypyidaw wants these groups to assume a role in the state security apparatus.

The Voice of America also reported that one of the major regional groups, the United Wa State Army (UWSA), is not seeking a confrontation with the Myanmar government, but the group's leaders say that they are ready to fight if necessary to maintain their autonomy. The UWSA reportedly has more than 20,000 men under arms and has always been considered to be one of the junta's foremost challenges.

Burma/Myanmar is one of the most ethnically diverse nations in the world, with an estimated 130-plus officially recognized ethnic groups making up 30 to 40 percent of the population of 58 million. Since achieving its independence in 1948 from the British, the country has been plagued by politically and ethnically driven insurgencies. In 1989 one of the main insurgent groups dissolved along ethnic lines; the other insurgent groups negotiated ceasefire agreements with the military junta that provided the ethnic groups de facto autonomy and the right to retain their weapons and armies.

The UWSA has its origins in the 1989 ceasefire agreements with the government and administers the Special Region No. 2 within Myanmar's Shan State. The Wa-controlled areas lie in the heart of the Golden Triangle, a region long associated with opium and narcotics production. Western governments have linked the UWSA to the global heroin trade as a method of funding not only the UWSA, but the infrastructure within the Wa regions as well.

The region is heavily dependent on neighboring China for trade, legal and otherwise. This current flare-up of instability is worrisome to Beijing, as renewed fighting could send an estimated 100,000 refugees into China. In June 2009, a Myanmar government anti-narcotics

operation in the Kokang region of Shan State, which is populated by ethnic Chinese groups, escalated into a series of sharp firefights between the militia and government troops that drove 30,000 refugees into China's Yunnan Province. Beijing issued an uncharacteristically sharp rebuke to Naypyidaw, calling on the junta to immediately restore stability and to "protect the safety and legal rights of Chinese citizens in Myanmar."

Drug Trafficking

The Long Fight in Philippines' Drug War

Like many of its Southeast Asia neighbors, the Philippines is currently in the midst of a campaign against the methamphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) drug epidemic that has gripped the region. In 2009, the drug trade was valued between US\$6 billion and US\$8 billion in the Philippines alone; this value not only includes profits from the transshipment of drugs like heroin, cocaine, and marijuana, but also reflects the increasing role of the ATS (locally known as *shabu*) trade.

ATS, as lab-manufactured synthetic drugs, have a number of systemic advantages over plant-derived drugs: they are not dependent on the growing season or the weather, they are less labor-intensive, manufacturing operations are far easier to conceal, and production overhead is far less in terms of cost and complexity. Consequently, many drug-trafficking syndicates have focused on ATS and have established bases of operations in the Philippines. Other factors luring drug traffickers to the country include its archipelagic geography of more than 7,000 islands, its proximity to markets, and the perception of relatively weak state capacity in enforcing its drug laws.

Led by Director-General Dionisio Santiago of the country's national-level counternarcotics agency, the Philippines Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) in 2007 shut down several large-scale ATS production labs. One of those labs was capable of making more than 650 pounds of *shabu* a day.

According to Mr. Santiago, by 2009 the PDEA had effectively broken the back of the drug syndicates from China and Taiwan, but now Nigerian groups have moved in to fill the void. The PDEA currently has more than 600 agents in its ranks, but it estimates it needs

roughly three times that number to decisively gain the upper hand against drug trafficking in the country.

Arms Trafficking

Iranian Arms Smuggling Ring Cracked in Italy

Following an eight-month collaborative investigation by Italian and other European law enforcement agencies, the Italian police announced the arrest of nine people, including two Iranians, on suspicion of smuggling arms to Iran in direct contravention of a 2007 United Nations Security Council sanction and arms embargo. Italian authorities believe that both of the Iranians are members of intelligence services.

According to Reuters, the arms trafficking bust prevented "tracer bullets, explosives from eastern Europe and explosive material for incendiary bombs," as well as "1,000 German-made rifle sights and 120 military diving jackets" from reaching Iran via third-country intermediaries. The Italian Finance Police official who oversaw the operation, Col. Vincenzo Andreone, described some of the Italians arrested as "entrepreneurs, the heads of various import-export [businesses]" who established "a triangular system to cover their tracks. The trafficking was taking place at least since 2007."

One of the alleged Iranian intelligence operatives is an accredited member of Italy's foreign press club; Tehran has since called for his release and warned that his continued detention could invite reciprocal treatment in kind.

Cyber Security

Spooks and Ghosts in Cyberspace

Cyber-spies filched sensitive information from a variety of organizations, including secret documents from the Indian military, mission reports from the UN, Canadian visa applications, and emails from the office of the Dalai Lama. The cyber-spies were traced to the city of Chengdu in China. In a report released on April 5, 2010, researchers from the Information Warfare Monitor and the Shadowserver Foundation said the attackers focused on stealing sensitive information, but also took some financial and personal information.

The study found that the espionage network was most likely run by organized criminals with no obvious link to the government of the People's Republic of China. However, the report noted there was an "obvious correlation to be drawn between the victims, the nature of the documents stolen, and the strategic interests of the Chinese state." The Chinese government denied any knowledge of the affair.

The spies used social networks like Twitter, Google, Yahoo, and Baidu to hide their illicit activity. From these social networking sites, their victims would click on an advertisement that linked their computers to a command and control server. From there, the hackers could take control of the victim's computer to steal information. Among the information stolen were sensitive documents outlining an Indian missile system and travel documents for NATO forces in Afghanistan. Computers in various embassies in Kabul, Moscow, Dubai, and Nigeria were compromised, as were those in the Indian embassy in Afghanistan and the Pakistani and Indian embassies in the United States. There was an attempted attack perpetrated on the American defense contractor Honeywell targeting advanced aerospace technology, although it is unclear whether any information was taken.

This study built on earlier research released in April 2008 revealing a network known as "GhostNet," also based in China, which took sensitive information from the offices of the Dalai Lama.

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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