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Chechen Warlord Shamil Basayev

Islam, Jamaats and Implications for the North Caucasus - Part 1

By Andrew McGregor

In the last few years, Russian security forces have inflicted considerable damage on Chechen resistance forces, most notably with the elimination of Chechnya's president, the late Aslan Maskhadov. Like hitting a pool of burning oil with a hammer, however, their military blows have sent the fires of insurgency across the North Caucasus. These flames are now nurtured by the evolution of a new resistance structure, the military jamaat.

The traditional jamaat is not a new social structure in the Caucasus. Its roots can be found in the early jamaats of Dagestan at the time of Islamization. The jamaats were tribal-based communal organizations with political and economic roles. In time, the jamaats also assumed a defensive military role and commonly merged into more powerful confederations when the external threat was severe.

Today, in its simplest terms, a jamaat is a local community of Muslims, organized at an often basic level to share spiritual pursuits. Jamaats may be found from Wisconsin to Wessex, and in general have little to do with radical Islam. There are others, however, like Egypt's notorious Gama'a al-Islamiyya that have been responsible for acts of terrorism carried out in pursuit of an Islamic state. In the North Caucasus, the modern jamaat movement has been growing for nearly 20 years, producing both peaceful and militant varieties of the organization. In the last few years, however, there has been a tendency for North Caucasian jamaats to form the basis for military resistance to the administrative and security structures of the Russian Federation. Not all militants are members of a jamaat, but these organizations have taken the lead in the fighting against Russian federal forces

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outside of Chechnya.

Origins of the Caucasian Jamaats

In South Russia's present cauldron of religious, political and ethnic conflict, many jamaats have developed an Islamist political agenda. Their concerns, like their origins, tend to be local in nature. Land claims, mosque closings, moral laxity, political corruption, police brutality and other local problems dominate their public statements. Rarely is there mention of other theaters of the war on terrorism, or references to the so-called "global jihad."

The involvement of the jamaats in the fight against Moscow appears to have been part of a plan conceived by Aslan Maskhadov not long after the expulsion of his forces from Grozny in 2000. As a veteran Soviet officer, Maskhadov understood the strategic need to broaden military resistance beyond the confines of Chechnya. Shortly before his death in 2005, Maskhadov declared that, by his orders, "additional sectors were established [early in the conflict]: Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Dagestan, etc. Amirs of these fronts were appointed, and they are all subordinate to the military leadership of the Chechen resistance" (RFE/RL, March 7, 2005). Despite their many differences, the agent of Maskhadov's efforts to expand the conflict was warlord Shamil Basayev.

Are the Jamaats Wahhabist?

Russian Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev, who is himself a Muslim, has described the entire North Caucasus as a "breeding ground for Wahhabism," a very loaded term in Russian political discourse (Interfax, September 21, 2004). Can the jamaats actually be described as Wahhabist? Their adopted brand of Islam is Salafist in nature, drawing on the example of the model community established by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. In this way, they earn themselves the deprecating name of "Wahhabists" from Russian authorities (the term is borrowed from Saudi Arabia's Wahhabist movement, the most severe example of Salafi beliefs).

The Wahhabis were, and are, a puritan-style Islamic revivalist movement started in 18th century Arabia to eliminate the religious innovations that had attached themselves to Islamic worship since the days of Muhammad. The Wahhabist movement has used their alliance with Saudi Arabia's ruling family to spread their version of Islam internationally. Roaming Arab

preachers made some inroads in the Caucasus in the early 1990s, but members of the generation that now provides the young membership of the jamaats are to a large degree discovering Salafi Islam on their own initiative.

The Salafists of the jamaats, like the Wahhabis of Arabia, reject the veneration of saints, requests for their intercession or pilgrimages to their tombs. These are all cornerstones of Sufi worship, which has until recently dominated Caucasian Islam. In some places, a war of words has erupted between the leaders of official state-sponsored Islam and the independent jamaats. Fairly typical is a recent condemnation of the official imams of Dagestan by the local Sharia Jamaat. The jamaat denounced official Islam as nothing more than "ancestor worship," closer to Buddhism than Islam as it involves the veneration of "tombs, amulets and sacred monks." These conflicts have impeded the growth of Salafism in Sufi religious communities, and the jamaats' insistence on the rule of Sharia law alienates the still overwhelmingly secular population of the North Caucasus republics.

Of course, in Russia "Wahhabi" now refers to nearly all Muslims acting outside of official Islam, with the added association since 2001 of somehow being linked to al-Qaeda. It appears that none of the active jamaats have expressed any solidarity with Osama bin Laden's group, though they do cooperate with the diminishing number of Arab mujahideen still active in the Caucasus. Since the September 11 attacks, when all "Chechen bandits" became "international terrorists," Russian security services have maintained that the Chechen resistance is directed and funded by bin Laden's al-Qaeda. The Chechen conflict, far from being directed by al-Qaeda, seems to have barely registered with bin Laden and his associates. Russian security forces have spent so long dealing with the elusive threat of al-Qaeda and the pursuit of terrorist non-entities like Achimez Gochiyayev that they have failed to notice the growth of a more concrete threat to the Federation's stability. The jamaats enjoy a flexibility and insularity that have allowed their proliferation without much interference from the police.

Strategic Advantage of the Jamaat Organization

Islam in the Caucasus survived the long period of Soviet rule by decentralizing. Kremlin-directed official Islam sought to create rigid hierarchies and careful documentation of observant Muslims and their activities. Unofficial Islam went in the opposite

direction. The Caucasus region's leading order of Sufis, the Naqshbandi Brotherhood, continued to thrive by rejecting a traditional Sufi hierarchy of hereditary leadership. Naqshbandi spiritual leaders were chosen largely by consensus (with some exceptions), so that their arrest or demise did not threaten the continued existence of the lodge. Generally small in numbers (40 or less), their strong local base, reinforced by ethnic, clan and family ties, usually defied all Soviet attempts at infiltration. The other leading Sufi brotherhood, the Qadiris, maintained a hierarchal system that exposed their leaders to targeting by Soviet police.

It is important to recognize that the Soviet-era Naqshbandi Sufi lodges were not intended to wage any kind of military resistance. They do, however, provide a proven method of organizing locally while avoiding the attention of authorities. The jamaats are similar to the Sufi lodges in many ways, even if they represent conservative rather than popular forms of Islam. They rely almost exclusively on local membership and leaders. In most cases the jamaats are created spontaneously, fulfilling the spiritual needs of those returning to the Islamic fold. Official Islam, stained by corruption and pro-Kremlin subservience, has failed in its attempts to rein in the Islamic revival. It is the energy of the underground jamaats that Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev has devoted the last few years to harnessing.

Both Dagestan's Sharia Jamaat and Kabardino-Balkaria's Yarmuk Jamaat have made attempts to broaden their ethnic membership from the original core group. The Salafist interpretation of Islam practiced by the jamaats is open to a broader membership than the old Sufi lodges. The Yarmuk Jamaat made a statement explicitly rejecting any attempts to represent the jamaat as a "monoethnic organization" (Utro.ru, February 4, 2003). Russian converts to Islam have also joined the jamaats, and a few of these converts have been involved in combat actions. According to pro-Russian Chechen militia leader Sulim Yamadayev, these individuals have found their way to the jamaats from Krasnodar, Volgograd, Stavropol and the Astrakhan Oblast.

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Islamic Radicalism in Mexico: The Threat from South of the Border

By Chris Zambelis

The ongoing controversy surrounding the debate over illegal immigration and border security issues in the United States, specifically as it applies to the porous U.S.-Mexico frontier and the status of millions of undocumented workers and other migrants that enter the country each year from Mexico, continues to dominate headlines. Although the overwhelming majority of those entering the United States from Mexico each day are in search of opportunity, many observers worry that it is only a matter of time before al-Qaeda exploits this vulnerability for its own ends.

In assessing this threat, Muslim communities in Mexico have come under increasing scrutiny by U.S., Mexican and international security officials both as potential enablers for terrorist infiltration and as ideological sympathizers for the brand of radicalism characteristic of al-Qaeda. Muslim conversion trends in Mexico and Latin America have also raised concerns, especially given al-Qaeda's successes in luring some Muslim converts to its cause. To date, however, these assessments have been way off the mark and in many respects divert attention away from the far more pressing threats at hand. A closer look at the nature of Islam and the outlook of Mexican Muslims may explain why.

Islam in Mexico

Compared to other countries in Latin America that are home to sizeable Muslim communities with longstanding ties to the region, Mexico's Muslim minority is tiny. At the same time, it is one of the most diverse and dynamic in the region. Despite varying figures and scant data, only a couple thousand Muslims are believed to live in the overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country. Nearly all are Sunni Muslims. Of this group, approximately half trace their origins to what is modern-day Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine, mostly the descendants of traders and peasants who emigrated from the Middle East in the latter part of Ottoman rule. Mexico's Arab Muslim community is assimilated in major urban centers such as Mexico City. Significantly, Mexico is also home to a much larger Arab Christian community, also originating from the Levant, which numbers in the tens of thousands. Both communities share close ties and feel a shared sense of pride for their common Arab heritage [1].

Mexican Converts

The other segment of Mexico's small Muslim community is made up of Mexicans who converted to Islam in recent years. Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the world, partially as a result of intermarriage and religious conversion. This trend is also evident elsewhere in Latin America, despite the longstanding influence of the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, widespread and growing disenchantment with the Catholic Church is leading many Mexicans and others in the region to find spiritual solace elsewhere, including Islam.

One of Mexico's longest running and most influential Muslim organizations is the Centro Cultural Islamico de Mexico (CCIM). Founded in 1995, the CCIM is a Sunni Muslim organization based in Mexico City. It is led by Omar Weston, a British Muslim convert who was born Mark Weston. It runs two mosques and an array of social welfare and education programs that include Arabic language training and a *dawa* (call) for conversion. It also has links with Muslim communities elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean (<http://www.islam.com.mx>). Despite some vague and unsubstantiated reports, there is no evidence implicating Weston and the CCIM to radicalism or terrorism.

Mexico is also home to a number of small Sufi orders led by two women, Sheikha Fariha and Sheikha Amina, the most prominent being the Nur Ashki Jerrahi order, a branch of the Halveti-Jerrahi Tariqat community of dervishes based in the Masjid al-Farah in New York City and other major U.S. cities. The group has branches in Mexico City, Cuernavaca and Oaxaca (<http://www.nurashkijerrahi.org>). The group has been described as adhering to an unconventional blend of traditional Sufi mysticism and New Age ideologies [2]. There is no evidence implicating these groups to radicalism or terrorism.

The *Murabitun* (the Almoravids, after the African Muslim dynasty that ruled North Africa and Spain in the 11th and 12th century) also has a presence in Mexico (<http://www.cislamica.org>). The group is a well-funded international Sufi order based in Granada, Spain that claims thousands of followers across the globe, including many European converts. It is also regarded as one of the most aggressive missionary movements in Latin America and a major rival of Omar Weston's CCIM. It was founded in the 1970s by Sheikh Abdel Qader as-Sufi al-Murabit, a Scottish Muslim convert born Ian Dallas who was formerly a playwright and

actor. Dallas is a controversial figure who, among other things, is a vocal critic of international capitalism and modern forms of finance. Although there is no evidence linking him or his organization to violence or terrorism, he has been accused of harboring pro-Nazi leanings and other radical ideologies. Othman Abu-Sahnun, an Italian Muslim convert and former ranking member of the Murabitun who had a falling out with the group, dedicates an entire website accusing his former leader of extremism, corruption and being party to alleged sinister conspiracies involving Freemasonry (<http://www.murabitun.cyberummah.org>).

Chiapas

In recent years, Mexico's volatile and impoverished southern state of Chiapas, which is home to a predominately indigenous population that traces its ethnic and cultural lineage to the Mayans, has been the target of Muslim missionaries. The indigenous peoples of Chiapas are underserved and face severe discrimination in Mexican society. In fact, these circumstances are one of the main reasons why Evangelical and other Protestant Christian sects target them in search of new adherents, an ongoing trend in Chiapas and elsewhere in Latin America. In an effort to win over converts, Christian missionary organizations have been running social welfare and humanitarian programs for decades targeting Mexico's indigenous communities. In doing so, they emphasize what they describe as the failure of the Roman Catholic establishment to cater to the spiritual and material needs of the people in the region, often with great success [3].

Muslim missionary groups, especially the Murabitun, which is led by Aurelino Perez in the region, and Omar Weston's CCIM, use similar tactics in an effort to win over adherents in Chiapas. In addition to providing much needed social welfare and humanitarian aid, the Murabitun argue that Catholicism represents a vestige of European imperialism that is directly responsible for the destruction of Mayan culture. Likewise, Catholicism is seen as a tool of the state that is to blame for the poverty and plight of the indigenous peoples. The anti-capitalist message of the Murabitun in particular also resonates with some of the impoverished locals. Murabitun discourse even emphasizes what it describes as the close cultural and ethnic links between the indigenous peoples of the region and the Muslim Moors who once ruled Spain. Therefore, conversion to Islam represents a reversion to their original identity, essentially an assertion of cultural and ethnic identity long suppressed

by European colonialism. The Murabitun went as far as to engage Subcommandante Marcos and his Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), following the group's armed rebellion in Chiapas in 1994, in an effort to gain support (<http://www.ezln.org.mx>).

The number of indigenous peoples who have converted to Islam is believed to number in the hundreds. Significantly, the majority of indigenous peoples converting to Islam are among those who previously converted to Protestantism and other sects. Although religious affiliation in Chiapas tends to be more pluralistic relative to the rest of Mexico due to the influence of indigenous beliefs and customs, Mayans who turn away from the Catholic Church often face discrimination and violence. Many have even been expelled from their homes by violent gangs and are now known locally as the *expulsados* (the expelled). For example, many of the Muslims of Chiapas trace their lineage to the Tzotzil Mayan village of San Juan Chamula. A large segment of this community was expelled decades ago for adopting Evangelical Christianity. They now reside in Nueva Esperanza, an impoverished section of San Cristobal [4].

In addition to the Murabitun, Muslim missionary activity in San Cristobal has been attributed to the efforts of a group known as the Mission for Dawa in Mexico, represented locally by Esteban Lopez Moreno, a Muslim convert from Spain who is also linked to the Murabitun [5]. Organizations such as the Murabitun and other Muslim groups line up alongside Pentecostals, Jehova's Witnesses, Mormons and other proselytizers in the hunt for new adherents. Under these circumstances, impoverished locals will often convert to a new faith based on which congregation could provide the most benefits. Many, however, take their newfound faith seriously. With the financial support of local and international groups, Mayan Muslims made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 2005, the first group from Chiapas to do so [6].

Reports pointing to possible terrorist links with Muslim missionaries in Chiapas have surfaced in the Mexican and Spanish media. Spanish authorities have raised suspicions about possible links between Spanish members of the Murabitun living in Chiapas and radical Islamists in Spain. Other reports have even linked the group with Basque separatist movements such as ETA. Othman Abu-Sahnun is a proponent of this theory (<http://www.murabitun.cyberummah.org>). Mexican authorities have also investigated the activities of the Murabitun due to reports of alleged immigration and visa abuses

involving the group's European members and possible radical links, including to al-Qaeda [7]. Despite these allegations and extensive media hype in Mexico and other Spanish-language press, no concrete evidence has surfaced to date substantiating such claims.

Conclusion

U.S. policymakers and security officials should continue to worry about border security and the potential for al-Qaeda infiltration into Mexico. Given the evidence to date, however, any potential inroads by al-Qaeda into Mexico is not likely to come through ties with Mexico's Muslim community—and this includes local converts or otherwise. Washington would be better served by concentrating its resources to confront Mexico's weak institutions, corruption, the influence of drug and other criminal gangs and poverty that may be exploited by al-Qaeda as a means to a greater end, as they have all too often in other parts of the world.

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Notes

1. Luz Maria Martinez Montiel, "The Lebanese Community in Mexico: its Meaning, Importance and the History of its Communities," *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1993).
2. Natascha Garvin, "Conversion and Conflict: Muslims in Mexico," *International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World Review* [Netherlands], Spring 2005).
3. Thelma Gomez Duran, "Muslalmenes en Chiapas," *WebIslam: Islam en Latinoamerica*, No. 132, July 20, 2001.
4. Bill Weinberg, "Islamic Sect Targets Chiapas Indians," *Native Americas Journal*, August 28, 2003.
5. "Los musulmanes del sureste mexicano," *Univison*, October 4, 2004.
6. *Dawn*, January 28, 2005.
7. Natascha Garvin, "Conversion and Conflict: Muslims in Mexico."

The Role of Kinship in Indonesia's Jemaah Islamiya

By Noor Huda Ismail

On April 29, the Indonesian police raided the safe house of Jemaah Islamiya (JI) senior member Noordin Mohammed Top in Wonosobo, Central Java. Noordin, Southeast Asia's most wanted terrorist, eluded capture by escaping only hours before police arrived at his hideout. Two of his trusted men, however, were killed and another two were arrested (Detik.com, April 29).

JI has been weakened by arrests and other counter-terrorism measures since the 2002 Bali bombings that killed more than 202 people, mostly foreigners, with several hundred more injured. Terrorists have struck with murderous effects twice in Jakarta and once more in Bali since the first major bombings. These events demonstrate that all parts of the terrorist network have not ceased jihadi operations.

JI has survived partly because it is held together by an intricate pattern of kinship. Generally, people do not gravitate to JI due to some individual pathology. Indeed, most recruits look, dress and behave like normal individuals, at least until they are given a deadly mission or are deeply engaged with the JI ideology and group. The choice to become a terrorist or engage in terrorist activities is a gradual process with many routes toward this type of political violence.

Once inside the group, JI members tend to cement ideological and other bonds by marrying the sisters and daughters of their comrades-in-arms. This is a unique tool utilized for recruitment and for further engagement in the JI cause, thus limiting disengagement options for JI members and blocking effective counter-terrorism tactics.

Therefore, it becomes difficult for a member to defect from JI without seeming to betray his family in the process of disengagement. Kinship ties help to keep the network secure from infiltration. JI as a case study offers several examples highlighting the complexity of kinship links in terrorism, such as relationships between two or more male siblings, between in-laws, between fathers and sons, as well as more distant kinship relations.

Sibling Relationships

The use of sibling relationships in jihadi recruitment is to provide further ideological support for the recruits beyond the group itself. Sometimes two or more brothers are recruited for jihad, helping each other during an operation and providing each other inspiration and reassurance. This particular type of recruitment is an effective use of kinship to ensure deeper engagement with the cause and group.

One example of such sibling kinship and terrorism is the family of Achmad Kandai. In the 1950s, he belonged to the hard-core movement Darul Islam, which tried to assassinate the first Indonesian President Sukarno in 1957. Darul Islam is an Islamic Indonesian rebellion movement whose aim has been to turn the country into a state ruled by Islamic law. For more than five decades, Darul spawned many offshoots and splinters that committed violent acts in the name of jihad [1].

Nasir, a brother of Kandai's, worked with Abdullah Sungkar and Abubakar Ba'asyir, two successive spiritual heads of JI in Malaysia in the 1980s and 1990s. Kandai's sons Farihin bin Ahmad, Abdul Jabar, Mohammed Islam and Solahudin all became jihadists. In August 2000, Ahmad and Jabar participated in the attack on the Philippine ambassador's Jakarta residence that killed two people and injured 22 others, including Ambassador Leonides Caday (*Washington Diplomat*, August 1, 2000).

Mohammed Islam, the third brother, became involved in several bombings during the religious conflict in Poso in Central Sulawesi where violence between Muslims and Christians led to hundreds of deaths on both sides between late 1998 and 2002 (and where intermittent violence continues to this day) [2].

The fourth brother, Solahudin, was among those arrested in the April 29 raid in Wonosobo, Central Java. He is now under police interrogation for his involvement in a series of terrorist attacks including the bombing of the Atrium shopping mall in August 2001 where the designated bomber lost his leg and was arrested after the bomb he was carrying blew up prematurely [3].

The complex kinship relations found in terrorism, illustrated by the Kandai family, is not an anomaly in the JI terrorist faction. The al-Ghozi family is another jihadi family. Faturrahman al-Ghozi, who was shot and killed by the Philippine police in 2003, was one of

JI's main bomb-makers. Among other actions, he was the perpetrator of the devastating Rizal Day bombing in Manila in 2000 that killed 12 people and wounded 19 others (*Inquirer News Service*, July 8, 2003).

Al-Ghozi's father was a Darul Islam member who was jailed during the Suharto era. A younger brother, Ahmad Rofiq Ridho, is now standing trial on several charges including sheltering the Malaysian JI member Noordin Mohammed Top. Last year, Ridho set a precedent for JI by marrying his brother's widow in a ceremony in a Jakarta police detention facility [4].

Gempur Angkoro, whose alias is Jabir, is al-Ghozi's cousin and was one of Top's most trusted men; he, too, was killed in the April 29 raid. Jabir assembled the bombs used in the deadly attacks in Jakarta at the Australian Embassy in 2004 and the JW Marriott hotel in 2003 (*Jakarta Post*, May 2).

The first Bali bombing introduced three brothers to the outside world: Ali Ghufron (Mukhlas), Amrozi and Ali Imron. The first two are now on death row. Ali Ghufron was in charge of overall supervision of the bombing. Amrozi procured the chemicals and vehicles needed for the attack, while the third brother coordinated transport of the bomb [5]. Another set of brothers, Herlambang and Hernianto, were also involved. Hernianto later died in jail, allegedly of a kidney complaint.

Hambali and Rusman Gunawan, whose alias is Gun Gun, are another set of JI brothers. Hambali, now in U.S. detention, was JI's liaison with al-Qaeda. Gun Gun was involved in the Marriott hotel bombing in 2003. He attended university in Pakistan and from late 2002 took over as the intermediary for e-mail messages between al-Qaeda and Hambali, who was then hiding in Cambodia [6].

There was also a set of JI brothers in Singapore, Faiz and Fatihi bin Abu Bakar Bafana. Faiz was treasurer of the first JI region, or Mantiqi 1 (JI's regional division that provides the economic wherewithal for JI operations), and has admitted to receiving funds from Osama bin Laden via Hambali. Fatihi carried out reconnaissance against Western targets in Singapore [7]. Mantiqi 1 was initially led by Hambali and subsequently replaced by Ali Ghufron (Mukhlas) in 2001 [8].

The cell in Singapore was started by Afghanistan alumni Ibrahim Maidin in 1988-1989. He was arrested in 2001 and another Afghanistan alumnus, Mas Selamat Kastari,

assumed leadership until he was arrested in early 2003. Before it was broken up by the Singaporean intelligence agencies, JI had 60 to 80 members. No more than 25 members were operatives. As of May, there are 36 people detained in Singapore under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for terrorism activities in support of JI leaders and/or the Moro Islamic Liberation Movement (MILF) [9].

In-Law Relationships

Kinship ties also include in-laws. Ali Ghufron married Farida, younger sister of Nasir bin Abas, a Malaysian who once served as Mantiqi 3 chairman. Nasir, who abandoned the JI cause and wrote a book entitled *Exposing Jemaah Islamiya*, was sufficiently loyal to his brother-in-law to write that he had been the best possible husband for his sister. Another JI member, Syamsul Bahri, is another of Nasir's brothers-in-laws [10].

Taufiq Abdul Halim, the Malaysian who lost part of his leg in the Atrium bombing, is the brother-in-law of Zulkifli Hir, a leader of a Malaysian jihadi group, which was responsible for a series of crimes including the assassination of a state assemblyman [11].

Another example is Datuk Rajo Ameh, who participated in the Christmas Eve bombing in 2000 among other attacks. He is the father-in-law of JI member Joni Hendrawan, who was involved in the first Bali bombing and the 2003 Marriott attack [12]. Muhammad Rais, another Marriott figure, is the brother-in-law of Top. Rais recruited a suicide bomber for the Marriott bombing [13].

Fathers and Sons

Anxious for their offspring's safety and with an eye to regenerating JI, senior members sent their children to study in Karachi, where they formed the so-called *al-Ghuraba* (the foreigners) cell.

During university break, some members of the group went to Afghanistan for a course in urban warfare. Six of them traveled to Pakistan-controlled parts of Kashmir where Lashkar-e-Toiba, a guerrilla movement affiliated with al-Qaeda, gave them a month of physical and military training. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency discovered the group in September 2003 [14]. Abdul Rohim, Abubakar Ba'asyir's son, was the cell leader [15]. One of its members was Abu Dzar, whose father is a long-time associate of Hambali's

and two of whose uncles are JI members. Abu Dzar's uncle, Muhamad Ismail Anwarul, who drove a taxi in Singapore, would later attend an al-Qaeda training camp in Kandahar during 2001. His sister had recently married Masran bin Arshad, the leader of Khalid Sheikh Mohammad's alleged suicide cell [16].

Another cell member was the Malaysian Muhammad Ikhwan, whose father, Abdullah Daud, attended an al-Qaeda surveillance course in Kabul in 2000. Ikhwan's older sister married another JI member. Likewise, the father of Singaporean student Mohammad Riza was sent by JI's Mantiqi 1 for military training in Mindanao [17].

Arranged Marriages

Arranging marriages between members of JI families was the ideal way of forging permanent alliances. JI spiritual leaders could play the roles of both matchmaker and marriage celebrant.

Abdullah Sungkar married two of his stepdaughters to senior jihadis—Ferial Muchlis bin Abdul Halim, a head of the Selangor JI cell, and Syawal Yassin, a prominent South Sulawesi figure and former military trainer in Afghanistan. Sungkar had been the celebrant at the 1984 marriage of future Mantiqi 4 leader Abdul Rohim Ayub and the Australian Rabiayah [18].

Haris Fadillah is a hard-core Darul Islam militia leader who fought and died in communal religious conflict in Ambon, Maluku, where thousands of Muslims and Christians lost their lives; many villages and places of worship were destroyed. He arranged the marriage of his daughter, Mira Augustina, to Indonesia-based al-Qaeda operative Omar al-Faruq. Following her husband's arrest in June 2002, Mira acknowledged that she had married al-Faruq the first day she met him [19].

In the same vein, Jack Thomas, an Australian jihadi, married the Indonesian Maryati in South Africa on the recommendation of his JI friends. Thomas, who even adopted the name "Jihad," likewise married his wife the day he met her. A Singapore jihadi called Jauhari testified in court that the Indonesian preacher Abu Jibril had helped choose his wife for him and that Abdullah Sungkar had married them at Abu Jibril's house [20].

As for Hambali, he married a part-Chinese woman, Noralwizah Lee, who converted to Islam. Like male JI members, Lee used several aliases and was active in

recruiting women to the cause. The couple first met at a function held by one of the women's groups under Abdullah Sungkar's auspices. The author established in interviews with one of the participating lecturers that one topic offered was "Women and Jihad" [21]. Lee shared Hambali's fate by being arrested in Thailand with him in August 2003.

Noordin Mohammed Top found time to take a second wife, Munfiatun al-Fitri, in a marriage arranged by Surabaya JI members in 2004. Like Ali Ghufron's wife, Munfiatun is well-educated and graduated in agriculture at East Java's Brawijaya University (*Jakarta Post*, March 8).

Conclusion

Understanding kinship ties in the jihadi network in Indonesia and beyond is critical. Without such ties, many alienated young Muslim men would not have become or remained jihadis. Kinship is particularly important in a clandestine organization like JI where maintaining relations of trust and confidence is crucial for survival. Additionally, jihadi organizations have the unusual advantage of having their own religiously qualified members available to officiate at the creation of new marital bonds.

Relatives of identified terrorists need to be closely monitored and investigated wherever they reside. Especially important are those who went to the same mosque and school, or who participated in the same military training either in local areas or abroad such as in Afghanistan or in Moro Islamic Liberation Front camps.

It is essential not to underestimate previous informal membership in action-oriented groups such as soccer or cricket that may facilitate the passage from radicalization into jihad and onto joining suicide attack teams. Lastly, profiling of jihadi families by looking at their social backgrounds is useful. It is also crucial to look at the ways in which a person gets drawn into terrorism and from that to develop counter-terrorism strategies.

Noor Huda Ismail earned a British Chevening scholarship and is now in the postgraduate program on International Security Studies at St. Andrews University. He can be reached at noorhudaismail@yahoo.com.

Notes

1. An interview with one of Darul Islam's leaders, Gaos Taufiq, in 2005 in Medan, North Sumatra. Taufiq said that Darul Islam sent 360 members to participate in military training in Afghanistan. Some of these people would later emerge as the fighters of today's Jemaah Islamiya.
2. In interviews in 2005, Nasir Abas, head of Mantiqi 3, one of JI's strategic area divisions, which covered the geographical region of the Philippines and Sulawesi and was responsible for military training and arms supplies, said that Poso had the potential to develop into a *qoidah aminah*, a secure area where residents can live by Islamic principles and law. In their view, such a base could then serve as the building block of an Islamic state; Maluku and Poso, therefore, remain a focus for religious outreach and recruitment efforts.
3. An interview with Farihin bin Ahmad in Jakarta in 2005.
4. An interview with Ahmad Rofiq Ridho in Jakarta prison in 2005.
5. An interview with Ali Imron in Jakarta Prison in 2005.
6. An interview with Rusman Gunawan in Jakarta Prison in 2005.
7. Ken Conboy, *The Second Front Inside Asia's most Dangerous Terrorist Network*, Equinox Publishing (Asia) Pte. Ltd. Indonesia, 2005.
8. ICG Asia Report No 63, August 26, 2003.
9. White Paper, *The Jemaah Islamiya Arrests and the Threat of Terrorism*, The Singapore Minister of Home Affairs, January 7, 2003.
10. An interview with Nasir bin Abbas in Jakarta in 2005.
11. An interview with Taufiq Abdul Halim in Jakarta Prison in 2004.
12. An interview with Joni Hendrawan in Jakarta Prison in 2005.
13. An interview with Muhammad Rais in Jakarta Prison in 2005.
14. Conboy.
15. An interview with Abdur Rahim in Solo, Central Java in 2004.
16. Conboy.
17. Conboy.
18. ICG Asia Report No 63.
19. An interview with Mira Agustina in Bogor, West Java in 2004.
20. ICG Asia Report No 63.
21. An interview with Muyazin in Solo in 2004.

Al-Qaeda's Presence in the Territories

By Murad al-Shishani and Abdul Bakier

Other than launching Katyusha rockets at Israel in December 2005 and attempting to launch rockets at Eilat from Aqaba in Jordan in August 2005, al-Qaeda has not launched significant attacks against Israeli targets in the Middle East. Al-Qaeda has not been active in the Palestinian territories, although fighting Israel is a top priority of Salafi-Jihadist ideology. There were many indications, however, of al-Qaeda's desire to penetrate the Arab-Israeli conflict as a consequence of Israeli's pullout from Gaza; this explains why al-Qaeda's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, criticized Hamas' participation in the peace process (al-Jazeera, April 3). The potential for al-Qaeda to penetrate the Arab-Israeli conflict exists, and it is important to understand the ideological perspective of Salafi-Jihadists toward Hamas, indications of al-Qaeda's role in the territories and al-Qaeda's chance for success.

Ideological Perspective Toward Hamas

On March 4, al-Jazeera aired a videotape of al-Zawahiri, who criticized Hamas for participating in the political process, calling on Hamas not to recognize Israel and the agreements signed by the "Secular Palestinian Authorities with Israel." It further warned Hamas not to participate in the "American game called political participation" (al-Jazeera, March 4). Al-Zawahiri's perspective in criticizing the participation of Hamas in the political process is not a new one. He previously criticized Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood for participating in the political process in a long book he wrote, titled *Bitter Harvest*, focusing on their "wrong" belief in political participation. Likewise, the Salafi-Jihadist perspective on Hamas revolves around the same connotation, even though this perspective is not publicized.

The Salafi-Jihadist ideologue Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi once wrote an article entitled "*Hamas Mojard Hamas*" ("Hamas is Just Enthusiasm"), resenting its alliance with the secular Palestinian forces and Hamas' criticism of the suicide attacks by al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia. He wrote, "we remark that there is no prohibition on the existence of Hamas or whomever on the right path that seek to elevate Allah's word. There is good in Palestine and elsewhere, but our criticism of the so-called Hamas is because it has delayed the big

holy war in Palestine and distorted the fundamentals of the religion which can never be argued or renounced for political gains" (<http://www.tawhed.ws>, 2004).

In the same context, al-Qaeda ideologue in Saudi Arabia Abu Jandal al-Azdi (also known as Faris al-Zahrani), currently imprisoned there, criticized Hamas for its support of late Palestinian National Authority (PNA) President Yasser Arafat and for believing in democracy, deeming the PNA apostates that should be fought on par with Israel (<http://www.tawhed.ws>, 2003). Also, the Salafi-Jihadist ideologue in Iraq, Abu Anas al-Shami (also known as Omar Yossif Joma'a), called Hamas an incomplete Islamic movement due to its cooperation with ideas of "citizenship" and "political participation."

Al-Zawahiri's pep talk presents al-Qaeda as an alternative to Hamas. Al-Zawahiri stated clearly that "Jihad and Sharia" are the only alternatives (*al-Jazeera*, April 3). This explains al-Maqdisi's continuing aspiration to move the Salafi-Jihadist ideology "west of the river Jordan" (<http://www.alasr.ws>, December 25, 2004). Therefore, it is noteworthy that the Salafi-Jihadists are trying to penetrate the Arab-Israeli conflict zone. It is also what Osama bin Laden expressed in two of his speeches—in October 2001 and in October 2004—when he linked the September 11 attacks to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and vowed that the security of the United States is connected with that of the Palestinians. If this is an ideological aspiration of al-Qaeda, what is the potential of implementing that reality?

Al-Qaeda and the Territories

In an interview with *al-Hayat*, PNA President Mahmoud Abbas stated that there are strong indications of al-Qaeda's presence in Gaza and the West Bank (*al-Hayat*, March 2). Also, Jordanian authorities indicated the presence of an al-Qaeda cell in Gaza (*al-Hayat*, April 4). In May 2005, the Palestinian Azzam Abu al-Adas from Balata refugee camp in Nablus, studying in Jordan, was recruited in the Jordanian city of Irbid by Abdullah (also known as Abu Qudama) and Mo'taz Omar Seelawi, both members of al-Qaeda. They instructed Azzam to set up a terrorist cell in Gaza to perpetrate terrorist attacks against Israeli industrial facilities to undermine the Israeli economy; Azzam recruited Bilal Hafanawi from Gaza to assist in the operation. Bilal is a former Hamas activist who was heading a cell for al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades/Fatah in Gaza. On January 10, Israeli authorities arrested Azzam and Bilal as they were crossing from Jordan into PNA territories. On

February 2, both men were tried and charged in an Israeli military court for attempting terror attacks in Israel. This case indicated real mobilization of the Salafi-Jihadist movement westward, particularly to Gaza. This is logical due to the lack of Israeli control over the dense population of potential recruits in the Gaza Strip after the Israeli withdrawal. Furthermore, the pro-Hamas *al-Risalah* newspaper indicated the increasing support for al-Qaeda ideology in southern Gaza, particularly in Rafah and Khan Yunis districts (*al-Risalah*, March 9).

The dissidence of Hamas' right wing that opposes peaceful solution of the conflict and the May 8 announcement of a group claiming affiliation with al-Qaeda called Jaish al-Quds al-Islami (Islamic Army of Jerusalem) were the expected outcomes of Hamas' participation in the political process (*al-Ghad*, May 9). Hamas' success in the elections increased the chances of al-Qaeda's penetration for the following reasons. By shifting away from the right-wing, Hamas left Islamic Jihad alone and created a vacuum exploited by al-Qaeda through the rumor that the commander of Izz al-Din al-Qassam brigades (the military wing of Hamas), Muhammad Daif (also known as Muhammad Diab al-Missri), had switched to al-Qaeda. Hamas denied the rumor. Regardless of the validity of the rumor, it strongly indicates that the discord between the military and political wings of Hamas is expected to intensify in the future. On the other hand, pressure on Hamas will weaken it and prove true what Nehemia Strasler, an Israeli analyst in *Haaretz*, said: "And so Israel will continue imposing sanctions and a political boycott, and the radicals, such as Islamic Jihad, will become stronger. And when the Palestinian nation comes to the conclusion that neither Hamas nor Islamic Jihad have managed to improve the conditions, it will turn to the most radical of all, to al-Qaeda" (*Haaretz*, February 21).

Externally, Hamas is facing a real challenge to proceed from political participation to the peace process. Internally, Hamas has to improve the economic conditions of the Palestinians, a top priority according to recent polls conducted in the territories. It seems that as a consequence of the external and internal factors, al-Qaeda is counting on the failure of Hamas. The last factor is connected to Al-Qaeda in Iraq which is more *Shami* (a geographical term used in Arabic to describe Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq) in its outlook. This explains why it may become active in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and on the Gaza border in the Sinai desert, a weak area lacking development, education and suffering from poor socio-economic conditions (*al-*

Hayat, May 7). Sinai was targeted more than five times last year. Tacking westward seems a substantive decision of al-Qaeda considering its constant efforts to create a safe haven for its operations, and the ideological priority of the Palestinian issue.

Conclusion

The factors mentioned above play a major role in the possible penetration by Salafi-Jihadists into the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These factors are divided into local, regional and international levels. Al-Aqsa press noted the increasing popularity of al-Zarqawi among Palestinian youths as a consequence of his latest videotape aired on al-Jazeera (al-Jazeera, May 6). Al-Aqsa said that even the head cover that al-Zarqawi wore in the tape became a vogue among Palestinian youths. Most significant is that those youths express the duty to fight traitors in the PNA in conformity with al-Qaeda's pep talk instigating the killing of apostates and Israelis. It seems that the proclamation of responsibility for the attempted assassination of the head of the Palestinian intelligence services on May 21 by a new group calling itself Al-Qaeda Organization of the State of Palestine is contextual. Therefore, all parties, including the international ones, should not push the Arab-Israeli conflict into a dangerous slide and escalation that is bound to occur if al-Qaeda enters the conflict. Despite the obstacles that al-Qaeda faces in penetrating the Arab-Israeli conflict area as a result of the highly politicized nature of the Palestinian people, Hamas' possible failure in the political process and the regression of other Palestinian parties will make it that much easier for al-Qaeda to penetrate.

Palestinian political parties need restructuring to be able to understand the political variants of the region; more importantly, they need to keep their cadres from switching to al-Qaeda. Hamas has to create a balance between internal support and recognition by the international community. Israel, on its part, has to realize the threat of Salafi-Jihadist success in penetrating the area. Fewer Palestinian political options mean a greater chance of violence prevailing over politics.

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