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Tensions Rise Between Hizb-i-Islami and the Taliban in Afghanistan

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Tensions Rise Between Hizb-i-Islami and the Taliban in Afghanistan, Matthew DuPee and Anand Gopal, CTC Sentinel, August 2010



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COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER AT WEST POINT

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About the CTC Sentinel

The Combating Terrorism Center is an independent educational and research institution based in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy, West Point. The CTC Sentinel harnesses the Center's global network of scholars and practitioners to understand and confront contemporary threats posed by terrorism and other forms of political violence.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not of the U.S. Military Academy, the Department of the Army, or any other agency of the U.S. Government.

Evaluating the Al-Qa`ida Threat to the U.S. Homeland

By Philip Mudd



IN THE NINE years since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the counterterrorism campaign in the United States has changed remarkably. In the initial years after 9/11, the primary counterterrorism concern was the presence of more al-Qa`ida-directed terrorists on U.S. soil. Focus was concentrated on preventing a weapon of mass destruction strike, a second coordinated mass transit attack, or a cell directed against a different infrastructure target. As time passed, the United States was able to avoid another al-Qa`ida-directed attack on U.S. soil as a result of good counterterrorism work, combined with a lack of capacity on the part of al-Qa`ida's central leadership.

Nevertheless, in recent years the United States has faced plots from individuals in Texas, Illinois, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina and other states. In contrast to the 19 hijackers on 9/11,

however, many of the recent terrorist plotters are U.S.-born Muslims or converts, with few, if any, links to al-Qa`ida's central leadership. Al-Qa`ida's revolutionary message, starting with the group's inception more than two decades ago and manifest in its 1998 *fatwa* against the United States, has clearly reached U.S. shores. Although al-Qa`ida is often viewed strictly operationally, its use of terrorism is only a tactic and the group's primary mission is to inspire a much broader movement of affiliated organizations and like-minded individuals to see the United States as the main target for attack. For al-Qa`ida, the purpose of the 9/11 attacks was not only to cause a massive loss of life, but to show the world that the United States is vulnerable. By revealing U.S. weakness, al-Qa`ida hoped to inspire more attacks, causing the United States to reduce its support for governments across the Islamic world. This reduction

for these Muslims, many of whom may have felt alienated in their communities because of their race, religion or economic status, to identify peers who felt a similar pull toward radical Islam. To connect with others who shared their extremist views and thus relieve their sense of alienation, these Muslim Americans often sought out like-minded individuals at mosques, where they were encouraged by an imam to travel outside the United States to wage jihad.³³ Some may have chosen to travel abroad because joining a terrorist group is a punishable crime, and evading the authorities by leaving the country may have been their preferred option, especially for those with prior criminal records.³⁴

Potential terrorist recruits today have more opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals in the United States than prior to 9/11, and there is more ideological and possibly logistical support for conducting domestic terrorist attacks. In addition to a larger network of “facilitators” for would-be terrorists, unrestricted access to the internet has introduced many American jihadists to the extremist ideology that underpins terrorist violence. U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Yemen may also spur more U.S. Muslims to consider jihad than in the years prior to 9/11.³⁵

Conclusion

American Muslim extremists who journeyed to foreign fields of jihad during the 1980s and 1990s did so largely outside the gaze of U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Although the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) suspected that hundreds if not thousands of people left the United States for conflicts abroad, a senior FBI counterterrorism official conceded in 2002 that “we didn’t understand the magnitude of what was going on here.”³⁶

Today, government scrutiny of Americans suspected of terrorist activities abroad is intense, as evidenced by the spate of prosecutions of U.S.

citizens accused of extremist activities in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, and elsewhere. Yet nearly a decade into the “war on terrorism,” government officials, policy specialists and terrorism scholars still know relatively little about the participation of Americans in violent extremism abroad before 2001. Politicians and policymakers typically frame the issue of violent extremism among U.S. Muslims as a novel, essentially post-9/11 phenomenon.

Building on the handful of pre-9/11 cases and mining the experiences of a much broader set of individuals could identify factors—personal, social, logistical, and ideological—that facilitated entry into foreign jihads. Ideally, a more comprehensive understanding of journeys to jihad in the 1980s and 1990s would inform and improve current efforts by the U.S. government—and the American Muslim community itself—to prevent the involvement of U.S. Muslims in violent extremism overseas.

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Tensions Rise Between Hizb-i-Islami and the Taliban in Afghanistan

By Matthew DuPee and Anand Gopal

IN MARCH 2010, clashes erupted between two of Afghanistan’s most important insurgent groups in northern Baghlan Province. A days-long battle between Hizb-i-Islami¹ and the Taliban left nearly 60 militants and 20 civilians dead. Hostilities between the two sides flared again in Wardak Province in July, where ongoing clashes killed 28 Taliban fighters, including an important local Taliban commander.²

The skirmishes, sparked by the growing reach of the Taliban and turf battles between the two groups, mark a significant fissure in the country’s militant movement. This article provides a closer look at these frictions and at Afghan government and coalition efforts to exploit them.

Northern Expansion

The intra-insurgent tensions are rooted in the dynamics of northern Afghanistan, once peaceful areas that have experienced spiraling violence in recent years. Since 2007, high-level Taliban commanders have repeatedly threatened to expand the war into the largely passive and ethnically divided north, a sparsely populated area where the main forces were non-combat ready International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) units and local security groups. The Taliban’s initial strategy for the north was to slowly build up intelligence and support networks in

1 Hizb-i-Islami is one of the three largest insurgent groups in Afghanistan. A young Islamist named Gulbuddin Hekmatyar formed the political faction in Pakistan in 1976 in response to the growing influence of leftist movements in the Afghan government and university campuses. During the 1980s, Hekmatyar, along with guidance from Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence and financial assistance from U.S. and Saudi intelligence services, propelled Hizb-i-Islami into the biggest mujahidin organization fighting against the Soviet occupation. Hekmatyar is infamous for his brutal battlefield tactics and backstabbing political deals, including the assassination of many of his political rivals.

2 Hakim Basharat, “Taliban, HIA Fighting Over Territory in Maidan Wardak,” Pajhwok Afghan News, July 29, 2010; Hakim Basharat, “HIA Backers Kill Taliban Member in Wardak,” Pajhwok Afghan News, July 13, 2010.

33 Silke, p. 118.

34 Ibid., p. 117.

35 Nelson, “Homegrown Terrorism Fact Sheet.”

36 John Mintz, “For US, American Holy Warriors Hard to Track,” *Washington Post*, July 16, 2002.

the northwest and northeast.³ They were able to exploit local grievances, particularly those caused by corrupt, ineffective government and ethnic tensions between non-Pashtuns and Pashtuns. By 2008, insurgent leaders were issuing special decrees calling for more attacks in these regions, spawning a surge of anti-government activity that has since seriously destabilized parts of the north and west.⁴

In particular, the northern corridor linking Kabul to the Tajikistan border has increasingly come under tremendous pressure from anti-government forces, including the Taliban and Hizb-i-Islami. Both groups largely operated in separate areas, but occasional tactical level cooperation was reported, although suspicion and competition between both fronts remained the norm. Kunduz and Baghlan provinces, located about 155 miles from Kabul, have suffered the brunt of deadly insurgent attacks and increasing insecurity.⁵ The Taliban have built an extensive network in the region—there are now an estimated 300 to 600 “hard core” fighters, most of them local, and scores of foreign fighters—both sharp increases from 2007.⁶ In June, Baghlan’s provincial council chief Muhammad Rasoul Muhsini said that the Taliban

have established clandestine “military centers” in 11 of Baghlan’s districts and that only five of the remaining districts were under *de facto* government control (Barka, Tala Barfak, Farang, Khost and Dahan-i-Ghori).⁷

Alongside the Taliban, Hizb has traditionally maintained a significant presence in both provinces. Under the command of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a Pashtun originally from Kunduz (Imam Sahib district), Hizb easily reactivated parts of its northern networks from the anti-Soviet insurgency and consolidated party representation, albeit modestly, in Baghlan and Kunduz. The group also

“The region has strategic importance for both groups because of a key transit route that runs south from Tajikistan through Kunduz and Baghlan. The route provides fuel and other vital logistical supplies to NATO forces, making it a magnet for insurgent attacks.”

has fighters in the region around Kabul and in the provinces near the eastern Afghanistan-Pakistan border. The U.S. military has previously estimated Hizb’s overall forces to number around 400 to 600, although experts suggest that the number is more likely to total close to 1,500 full-time fighters.⁸ Despite such numbers, the Taliban have in recent years surpassed Hizb as the dominant insurgent force in the area.⁹ Today, the

Taliban are far more aggressive and militarily resilient, as measured by the number of attacks they initiate and the extent of territory under their control.¹⁰ The Taliban succeeded in marginalizing Hizb’s influence in the area by implementing heavy-handed terrorist attacks, especially targeting influential tribal leaders and former commanders. This resulted in a power vacuum that they were able to exploit.¹¹

The region has strategic importance for both groups because of a key transit route that runs south from Tajikistan through Kunduz and Baghlan. The route provides fuel and other vital logistical supplies to NATO forces, making it a magnet for insurgent attacks. Indeed, violence in the area surged as international forces began to rely heavily on the route. The route, however, also began to fuel tensions between insurgent groups. At stake was access to a trade corridor—a valuable source of income and power.¹² By late 2009, turf battles over key pieces of terrain, including fertile farming areas and key logistical hubs, exploded between Hizb and the Taliban.

Fissures in the Insurgency

The largest clash between the two groups was the March 7, 2010 incident in northern Baghlan, when Taliban fighters nearly overran Hizb positions, prompting Hizb commanders to contact Afghan government officials in search of military support. Ultimately, the feud ended with the Hizb fighters being expelled from their strongholds and the Taliban seizing sizeable portions of Dahan-i-Ghori and Baghlan-i-Jadid districts.¹³ Since that time, a number of other clashes have taken place, even outside of the northern area. For

3 Officials believed the Taliban were distributing weapons and ammunition to groups in Kunduz and Baghlan in November 2006. A similar trend emerged in the northwestern province of Badghis around the same time. For more, see Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 130-131; Matthew C. DuPee, “Badghis Province: Examining the Taliban’s Northwestern Campaign,” *Culture & Conflict Review* 2:4 (2008).

4 In the spring of 2009, Mullah Baradar announced the launch of Operation Nusrat (Victory), the 2009 Taliban campaign aimed at attacking NATO and Afghan government forces including a special decree for insurgents in Kunduz to ramp up their activities.

5 In the case of Baghlan Province, a non-traditional Taliban stronghold, Hizb-i-Islami is more entrenched and politically established with many former commanders and their militias enjoying local autonomy and freedom of movement. The Taliban are considered more capable militarily and typically employ more coercive force, threats and violence to win the “hearts and minds.”

6 For more details, see Matthew DuPee, “Operation Nusrat (Victory): Understanding the Taliban Threat to Kunduz Province,” *Culture & Conflict Review* 3:3 (2009); Matthias Gebauer and Shoib Najafzada, “Situation Worsens in Northern Afghanistan,” *Der Spiegel*, August 3, 2009.

7 Habib Rahman Sherzai, “All Districts in Baghlan May Fall into Taliban Hands,” *Pajhwok Afghan News*, June 14, 2010.

8 Giustozzi, p. 132. According to a Hizb commander, however, the group has 4,000 members in the northern regions alone, although this figure is likely exaggerated. See Najibullah Quraishi, “Behind Taliban Lines,” *PBS Frontline*, February 23, 2010.

9 Following the successful parliamentary elections in 2005, many Hizb commanders and cadres folded back into the community, creating a vacuum for the Taliban to eventually penetrate and establish a more aggressive and violent military campaign in the north.

10 Personal interview, Afghan security official, May 2010.

11 Several prominent anti-Taliban militia commanders have been killed recently by the Taliban in Kunduz, including Commander Selab, Commander Hassan and a Taliban defector named Commander Abdullah.

12 Successful insurgent attacks on convoys can bring monetary rewards from the leadership or build the prestige of the field commander involved in the incident. Moreover, companies organizing supply convoys sometimes pay “protection money” to insurgents to ensure safe passage. See, for example, Aryn Baker, “How Crime Pays for the Taliban,” *Time Magazine*, September 7, 2009.

13 For details, see Fabrizio Foschini, “Baghlan - Divided We Stand,” *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, July 7, 2010.

instance, in late June the two sides skirmished in Wardak Province, near Kabul.¹⁴ In July, these skirmishes led to full battles in Nirkh district, when Hizb fighters—who were locals and had a better understanding of the terrain—handed a defeat to Taliban forces who had come from surrounding districts. In response, the Taliban brought in reinforcements from other provinces, which Hizb matched by mobilizing Kuchis¹⁵ from Nangarhar Province.¹⁶ In

“Increasingly desperate, the government appears to be outsourcing security and intelligence networks to Hizb-i-Islami to prevent the Taliban from gaining more territory, while at the same time Hizb-i-Islami is siding with the government to prevent further erosion of its influence from Taliban intrusions.”

late July, the combined Hizb-Kuchi force routed the Taliban and killed a number of their commanders, prompting the Taliban’s Quetta *shura* to send a commission to the district to assess the reasons behind their losses.¹⁷

In another instance, Hizb-aligned elders took control of parts of Nuristan Province in the country’s northeast after U.S. forces withdrew from the area in 2009, sparking further clashes with the Taliban.¹⁸ Taliban fighters have also assassinated key Hizb-aligned officials in recent months, the most prominent of whom was Maulavi Gul Rahman, a famous commander under

Hekmatyar during the anti-Soviet insurgency.¹⁹

In some cases, Taliban fighters see Hizb-i-Islami as ineffective or disapprove of their contacts with the Afghan government. Qari Ziaur Rahman, a prominent Taliban commander active on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border near Kunar, recently dismissed the group. “Hizb has not been effective in the last eight years,” he said. “They haven’t had any major successes in these years.”²⁰

Afghan and Western officials have made moves in an attempt to take advantage of these strains. A key element of their strategy is to convince rank-and-file Hizb fighters to leave the insurgency and form pro-government militias as a bulwark against Taliban activity. In other cases, they are attempting to adroitly exploit local dynamics. For instance, in a political move that largely escaped media attention, Afghan President Hamid Karzai appointed Hajji Abdul Munshi Majeed, the long-standing governor of Badakhshan Province, as Baghlan’s new governor in May 2010. Majeed is a Pashtun from Baghlan and reportedly has longstanding ties to Hizb-i-Islami. In fact, one group of analysts even contends that he is involved in “consolidating the party and reviving its communications network across the country.”²¹ This move also highlights the seriousness in which the government views the increase in Taliban activities and consolidation in the northern districts of Kunduz and Baghlan. Increasingly desperate, the government appears to be outsourcing security and intelligence networks to Hizb-i-Islami to prevent the Taliban from gaining more territory, while at the same time Hizb-i-Islami is siding with the government to prevent further erosion of its influence from Taliban intrusions.

With Majeed now acting as the governor of Baghlan, relations between the two groups are likely to strain further.²² Moreover, his appointment coincides with a push to eliminate the Taliban leadership in the province. According to NATO statements, joint Afghan and ISAF operations have “removed three successively appointed Taliban provincial shadow governors for the province.”²³ On May 14, Mullah Rohullah was killed along with his entourage, including his deputy, and his replacement, Maluvi Jabbar, was killed along with two Taliban military commanders (Mullah Haji Muhamood and Mullah Kajoor) on May 28.²⁴ Only three days later, the newly installed Taliban governor for Baghlan was also arrested. The events marked one of the biggest losses of provincial-level leadership for the Taliban anywhere in the country. Officials say that this is partly due to Hizb providing information to Afghan forces. “Intelligence comes from the armed forces of Hizb-i-Islami,” said a senior Afghan provincial official in July. “We buy information from the fighters.”²⁵ More than 50 Hizb fighters are being kept in a government safe house in Baghlan, also a likely source of intelligence for coalition forces.²⁶

In addition to the friction among insurgents at the local level, Afghan and U.S. officials have modified their stance toward engaging some of the insurgent leadership. For instance, the United States has publicly released several high-value Hizb associates beginning in 2008, including Dr. Ghairat Baheer, Hekmatyar’s son-in-law and top public relations figure, who was apprehended and held in custody since 2002.²⁷ Abdullah Shahab,

22 Strictly speaking, Majeed belongs to the legal wing of Hizb-i-Islami, which has officially repudiated Hekmatyar and abides by the Afghan constitution. Many observers, however, agree that there remain deep links between some officials in the legal Hizb-i-Islami and Hekmatyar’s wing.

23 “IJC Operational Update, June 22,” ISAF joint command statement, June 22, 2010.

24 Bill Roggio, “Newly Minted Shadow Governor Captured,” *The Long War Journal*, June 3, 2010.

25 Hamid Shalizi and Jonathon Burch, “Afghan Insurgents Supplying Taliban Intel to NATO—Officials,” *Reuters*, July 8, 2010.

26 *Ibid.*

27 Baheer was also given a visa to travel to London by British authorities in January 2009. For details, see “Se-

14 Hakim Basharat, “Three Injured as Taliban, Hizb Clash in Wardak,” *Pajhwok Afghan News*, June 27, 2010.

15 Kuchis are a nomadic, pastoralist culture in Afghanistan.

16 Personal interview, UN official, Kabul, August 2010.

17 Personal interview, Taliban commander for Wardak Province, Kabul, August 2010.

18 Personal interview, Afghan official from Nuristan, May 2010.

19 “Afghan Peace Cleric Rahman Gul Shot Dead in Kunar,” BBC, May 17, 2010.

20 Anand Gopal, “Afghanistan Warlord Hekmatyar Shuns Peace Jirga but Offers His Own Deal,” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 2, 2010.

21 Cole Hansen, Christian Dennys and Idrees Zaman, “Conflict Analysis: Baharak District, Badakhshan Province,” *Cooperation for Peace and Unity*, February 2009.

Also see David Isby, “Trojan Horse or Genuine Schism? The Hizb-i-Islami Split,” *Terrorism Monitor* 2:11 (2004).

Hekmatyar's nephew, was captured and held by U.S. forces since 2005 before his unexpected release in July 2009.²⁸ More generally, the United Nations has approved measures to ease some of the financial restrictions of those linked to the insurgency (but not to al-Qa`ida) and to review all detainees in Afghan, U.S. and NATO custody.

From Hizb's side, representatives of its military committee reached out to the Afghan government as early as 2008.²⁹ That year a group of lawmakers who once had ties to Hekmatyar met with Hizb representatives in Peshawar, while Hekmatyar himself sent conciliatory

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messages to Afghan President Hamid Karzai that spring.³⁰ In February 2010, this group hosted a second meeting in the Maldives, featuring a number of Hizb-linked clerics and unofficial representatives. The two sides agreed to explore ways to bring all parties to the negotiating table. At the same time, a group of Hizb figures, such as Hekmatyar deputy Qutbuddin Hilal and U.S. representative Daoud Abedi, began to open dialogue with U.S. and Afghan officials. These various moves culminated in an official Hizb delegation to Kabul, where Hilal, Baheer and other representatives met with President Karzai and former Northern Alliance

cret Talks with Taliban Under Way,” al-Jazira, February 27, 2009; Syed Saleem Shahzad, “A Struggle Between War and Peace,” *Asia Times Online*, June 3, 2008.

²⁸ *Wrazpanra Weesa*, July 29, 2009.

²⁹ This interaction refers to the insurgent component of Hekmatyar's military committee. A political bloc of former Hizb-i-Islami commanders and political leaders broke away from the central Hizb party led by Hekmatyar and became a legally registered party and participated successfully in the 2005 parliamentary elections.

³⁰ Personal interview, Afghan officials, April 2008.

and Taliban figures on March 18. The group delivered a 15-point peace proposal, which included a call for elections in return for a timetable for the withdrawal of troops. Hekmatyar said that the overture was prompted by the Obama administration's admission that the war could not be won solely through military means.³¹

Nevertheless, Hekmatyar and his senior military leadership appear to be seeking to negotiate from a position of weakness, as their base in the north erodes with the Taliban's advance. The defense of their stronghold in Nirkh in Wardak, however, shows that their capitulation is far from certain, and the dynamic of tensions with the Taliban while reaching out to the government is likely to continue for some time.

Conclusion

Given Hekmatyar's insistence on a troop withdrawal, the U.S. and Afghan governments are unlikely to strike a deal with him soon. Moreover, the peace overtures raise the question of what Hekmatyar's role will be in any post-agreement government, a deeply controversial issue. Nonetheless, if handled correctly the developments could be a step toward de-escalation of hostilities, where some rank-and-file insurgents abandon the fight and the violence mitigates in some parts of the country. Moreover, the approaches between the two sides could change the dynamic on the battlefield, giving much needed space for international forces to isolate the Taliban in the northern provinces. On the political front, Hizb-i-Islami has even attempted to portray itself as a force that can act as a bridge between Washington and the Taliban—a senior Hizb representative met with U.S. State Department officials in 2009 and then traveled to Quetta to meet the Taliban leadership in an attempt to foster dialogue.³² On the other hand, Hizb-i-Islami has little influence over the Taliban movement, and this specific meeting did not lead to an opening of dialogue among the three sides.

³¹ Anand Gopal, “Interview with Afghan Warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar: Can Peace Talks Succeed?” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 9, 2010.

³² Personal interview, senior Hizb-i-Islami representative, February 2010.

Peeling away rank-and-file Hizb fighters, or even striking a deal with the leadership, will not end the war—the problem of the Taliban and other insurgent groups such as the Haqqani network would remain major issues. Moreover, it is possible that some Hizb fighters could simply switch allegiances and fight under the Taliban's banner, and past atrocities attributed to Hekmatyar and Hizb commanders will not quickly be forgotten.³³ Yet if such moves open the door to more nuanced and varied approaches to the insurgency, it could augur well for an eventual approach to a political solution to the conflict.

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³³ Commanders and fighters are organized by the *andawal* network, which is based on personal ties between fighters and commanders. This means a wholesale transfer from Hizb to the Taliban is not likely, as it would mean breaking longstanding ties. Yet, it remains a possibility for some commanders.

Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

July 1, 2010 (UNITED STATES): The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled that government prosecutors must present evidence that an Algerian national, who has been held at Guantanamo Bay for more than eight years, was truly an al-Qa`ida member, otherwise he must be released. According to the Associated Press, the decision “has broad implications for the credibility of evidence the administration of President Barack Obama has presented to justify holding terror suspects without trial.” – *AFP, July 3*

July 1, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Two suicide bombers targeted the shrine of Data Ganj Baksh in Lahore, the capital of Punjab Province. The bombs killed at least 41 people. The site is considered Pakistan’s most important Sufi shrine. The Pakistani Taliban, however, publicly denied responsibility for the attack. – *CBS News, July 1; New York Times, July 1*

July 1, 2010 (YEMEN): Yemeni Political Security officer Saleh Amtheeb was assassinated in Zinjibar, Abyan Province. Authorities later apprehended four suspects, two of whom were al-Qa`ida members. – *Saba, July 3; AFP, July 3*

July 1, 2010 (SOMALIA): Somali and African Union troops launched an offensive against al-Shabab insurgents in Mogadishu. The insurgents have vowed to topple the government. – *Wall Street Journal, July 2*

July 1, 2010 (THAILAND): Muslim separatists killed five people in Narathiwat Province in southern Thailand. The fighters detonated a roadside bomb near a military vehicle and then opened fire. – *Voice of America, July 2*

July 2, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters, including multiple suicide bombers, stormed the compound of a U.S. aid group in Kunduz Province, killing at least two expatriate workers, a security guard and an Afghan police officer. All six of the Taliban assailants died in the

attack. The killed expatriate workers were from Germany and the United Kingdom. – *Los Angeles Times, July 3; Australian Broadcasting Corporation, July 2*

July 2, 2010 (THAILAND): A roadside bomb killed three Thai soldiers in Yala Province in southern Thailand. – *Voice of America, July 2*

July 3, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Taliban fighters attacked a checkpoint in Upper Orakzai, located in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Security forces retaliated, killing four Taliban fighters. – *Daily Times, July 4*

July 4, 2010 (GERMANY): German police arrested a 24-year-old Syrian man, identified as Hussam S., who is accused of recruiting for al-Qa`ida on the internet. He is also suspected of operating a German-language internet forum to distribute Islamist literature. The man was arrested in the southwestern town of Montabaur in Rhineland-Palatinate. – *Reuters, July 7*

July 4, 2010 (IRAQ): A female suicide bomber killed at least four people in Ramadi, Anbar Province. The bomber, who wore an explosives vest, managed to slip through four checkpoints at the provincial governor’s compound. She detonated her explosives outside Governor Qassim Mohammed Abid’s office. The governor and his two deputies were not injured. – *Washington Post, July 4*

July 4, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani security forces reportedly killed a senior commander in the Pakistani Taliban, identified as Ameerullah Mehsud (also known as Qari Gud). The commander, who was killed in a shootout with soldiers in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, carried a \$234,000 bounty for his arrest or death. He is considered one of the founders of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan. – *AFP, July 5; CNN, July 6*

July 5, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide squad of four militants attacked a paramilitary fort in Lower Dir District of the North-West Frontier Province. The militants, armed with car bombs and rockets, killed one soldier. All four of the fighters were killed. – *AFP, July 4*

July 5, 2010 (YEMEN): Yemeni soldiers and al-Qa`ida militants clashed in eastern Hadramawt Province. The militants killed two soldiers, while authorities apprehended two al-Qa`ida suspects. Another two al-Qa`ida suspects escaped. A third soldier later died of wounds sustained during the firefight. – *Reuters, July 5; Reuters, July 6*

July 5, 2010 (PHILIPPINES): Wu Xili, a Chinese shopkeeper held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf Group for nearly 19 months, was rescued by police. The rescue operation took place on Jolo Island in the southern Philippines. – *AFP, July 5*

July 7, 2010 (GLOBAL): Federal prosecutors in the United States revealed that the plot to bomb New York City’s subway system, which was foiled in September 2009, was directly related to a similar plot in Manchester in the United Kingdom. The Manchester plot involves Abid Naseer and Tariq ur Rehman, who were arrested by UK authorities in April 2009. U.S. authorities also allege that three senior al-Qa`ida operatives—Adnan Shukrijumah, Salah al-Somali and Rashid Rauf—organized the New York subway plot, recruiting Najibullah Zazi and two other men to conduct the attack. – *Wall Street Journal, July 7*

July 7, 2010 (UNITED STATES): Sudanese national Ibrahim Ahmed Mahmoud al-Qosi pleaded guilty in a U.S. military court at Guantanamo Bay to conspiring with al-Qa`ida and providing material support to terrorism. Al-Qosi ran the kitchen and provided supplies at one of Usama bin Ladin’s compounds in Afghanistan. He has been held at Guantanamo Bay for more than eight years. The terms of his plea agreement were not disclosed. – *Washington Post, July 8*

July 7, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Gunmen shot to death Mohammad Gul, director of the intelligence department of Kabul’s counter-crime police branch. One of his bodyguards was also killed. – *AFP, July 8*

July 7, 2010 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber killed at least 28 people in northern Baghdad. The bomber targeted Shi`a pilgrims en route to the Imam Musa

al-Kadhim mosque for a major festival. – *RadioFreeEurope/Radio Liberty, July 7; New York Times, July 7*

July 7, 2010 (YEMEN): A Yemeni court sentenced two al-Qa`ida members to death for their role in killing military and security officials. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, “The two men sentenced Wednesday were found guilty of ambushing and looting a military truck carrying weapons and of killing three soldiers, a policeman and a civilian during the subsequent pursuit in July 2009. The prosecution said they also attacked a convoy that killed two high-ranking police officials, including the director of political security, in November [2009].” They were identified as Mansour Daleel, who is 18-years-old, and Mubarak al-Shabwani, who is 23-years-old. – *Wall Street Journal, July 8*

July 8, 2010 (UNITED KINGDOM): A court convicted three Britons of plotting to kill hundreds of people in suicide bombings after being recruited by an al-Qa`ida-inspired cell. The men— Ibrahim Savant, Arafat Waheed Khan and Waheed Zaman—were part of the 2006 transatlantic aircraft plot that involved liquid explosives. According to Reuters, “Their conviction follows one of Britain’s biggest counter-terrorism investigations and a series of trials around a plot that prosecutors said could have been on the same scale as the 9/11 attacks.” On July 12, the men were sentenced to life in prison. – *Reuters, July 8; BBC, July 12*

July 8, 2010 (NORWAY): Authorities arrested three al-Qa`ida suspects in Norway and Germany, accused of planning terrorist attacks in Norway. The men arrested in Norway were identified as Mikael Davud, a 39-year-old ethnic Uighur with Norwegian citizenship, and David Jakobsen, a 31-year-old Uzbek with legal residency in Norway. The third man, who was arrested in Germany, was identified as Shawan Sadek Saeed Bujak, a 37-year-old Iraqi-Kurd who was on holiday in Duisburg. The plot is reportedly linked to the September 2009 New York City subway plot, as well as the April 2009 terrorist plot in Manchester in the United Kingdom. – *Voice of America, July 8; Reuters, July 13*

July 9, 2010 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber in a vehicle attacked an Iraqi Army checkpoint in western Baghdad, killing five people. Three of the dead were soldiers. – *CNN, July 9; BBC, July 9*

July 9, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a group of tribal elders in the administrative center of Mohmand Agency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. More than 100 people were killed. The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility. – *New York Times, July 9; Dawn, July 10*

July 9, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Taliban fighters attacked an army patrol in Makeen district of South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Three soldiers were killed. – *AFP, July 10*

July 10, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Insurgents overran a police checkpoint in Emam Saheb district of Kunduz Province, killing nine policemen. – *Reuters, July 11*

July 10, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A bomb killed the head of the police department in Qaleh Zaal district of Kunduz Province. – *Reuters, July 11*

July 10, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Five policemen were killed after hitting a roadside bomb in Badakhshan Province. – *Reuters, July 11*

July 11, 2010 (UGANDA): Two suicide bombers attacked crowds gathered to watch the World Cup final in Kampala, the capital of Uganda. The bombings, which were claimed by the al-Shabab militant group in Somalia, killed approximately 76 people. One attack targeted a rugby club filled with soccer fans, while the other bomber targeted a popular Ethiopian restaurant. At least one American was killed in the attacks. – *ABC News, July 11; Washington Post, July 13*

July 11, 2010 (NORTH AFRICA): Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) threatened to execute a French hostage in 15 days if the French government failed to meet its demands. The hostage has been identified as 78-year-old Michel Germaneau, who was seized in northern Niger in April. – *Reuters, July 11*

July 11, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani fighter jets and helicopter gunships attacked Taliban positions in Orakzai Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Authorities allege that 22 Taliban fighters were killed in the strikes. – *RTTNews, July 12*

July 11, 2010 (YEMEN): Security forces arrested eight suspected al-Qa`ida fighters, including a Saudi fugitive, accused of plotting attacks against security facilities in Yemen. – *al-Jazeera, July 11*

July 12, 2010 (RUSSIA): Russian security officials announced that they broke up a terrorist cell that was preparing female suicide bombers for attacks on major Russian cities. Authorities arrested six women, who had apparently already written “farewell letters” in anticipation of their impending attacks. The women were detained in the Muslim region of Dagestan. – *New York Times, July 12*

July 12, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): According to a senior Afghan official, President Hamid Karzai is seeking the removal of 50 former Taliban officials from a UN terrorism blacklist with the goal of advancing political reconciliation talks with Taliban insurgents. – *Washington Post, July 12*

July 12, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): The Afghan Defense Ministry said that 80% of Taliban bombs are made with ammonium nitrate and potassium nitrate fertilizer. Before 2007, however, most bombs were constructed from ordnance leftover from the Soviet occupation of the country in the 1980s. – *AFP, July 12*

July 13, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters attacked a police unit headquarters in Kandahar city, killing three U.S. soldiers, five civilian Afghan employees and one Afghan policeman. As part of the attack, a suicide bomber in a vehicle detonated his explosives at the entrance to the Afghan National Civil Order Police. Immediately after, Taliban militants fired rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns at the facility. – *Christian Science Monitor, July 14*

July 13, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani police arrested 650 suspected militants in the North-West Frontier Province in response to the July 9 suicide attack that killed more than 100 people in Mohmand Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The arrests took place in a three-day period. – *AFP, July 13*

July 13, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Taliban militants blew up a government-run middle school for boys in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *Daily Times, July 14*

July 14, 2010 (UNITED STATES): A video surfaced of Faisal Shahzad, who attempted to detonate a car bomb in New York City's Times Square on May 1, describing his planned bombing as a "revenge attack." In the video, Shahzad, who is in U.S. custody, dedicated his planned attack to Baitullah Mehsud and Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi, both of whom were killed by the United States. The video appears to have been filmed in Pakistan, and Shahzad is seen shaking hands with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan leader Hakimullah Mehsud. – *AOL News, July 14; Christian Science Monitor, July 15*

July 14, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): The Afghan government approved a program to establish local defense forces in the country. The program is similar to the Awakening Councils created by General David Petraeus in Iraq. According to the *New York Times*, "...the two programs would not be identical. Unlike the Iraqi units, the Afghan forces would not be composed of insurgents who had switched sides. They would be similar as a lightly armed, trained and, significantly, paid force in a nation starving for jobs." – *New York Times, July 14*

July 14, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb killed four U.S. soldiers in southern Afghanistan. – *Christian Science Monitor, July 14*

July 14, 2010 (INDIA): India's home secretary argued that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence was behind the November 2008 Mumbai attacks, in collaboration with Lashkar-i-Tayyiba. "The ISI has had a much more significant role to play (in the Mumbai attacks)," the official said. "It was

not just a peripheral role. They were literally controlling and coordinating it (the attacks) from the beginning till the end." According to Reuters, "His accusations are the strongest comments made by Indian officials since the attacks which brought the South Asian nuclear neighbours to the brink of war." – *Reuters, July 14*

July 14, 2010 (YEMEN): Approximately 20 suspected al-Qa`ida fighters attacked a Yemeni intelligence agency in Zinjibar, located in Abyan Province. A policeman and two militants were killed in the incident. – *Bloomberg, July 14*

July 15, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): NATO forces killed Mullah Akhtar, identified as a Taliban commander responsible for bringing foreign fighters from Iran into Afghanistan. He was killed in Farah Province. – *CNN, July 16*

July 15, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. aerial drone killed at least two people in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *USA Today, July 15*

July 15, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives at a bus stop in Mingora, the main town of Swat District of the North-West Frontier Province. Five people were killed. Authorities believe that the bomber tried to target a security force convoy. – *BBC, July 15; Reuters, July 15*

July 15, 2010 (IRAN): Two suicide bombers detonated their explosives at a Shi`a mosque in Zahedan, located in Sistan-Baluchistan Province in southeastern Iran. The explosions killed at least 26 people at the Jamia mosque. The Sunni rebel group Jundallah reportedly claimed credit for the bombings, saying it was revenge for Iran's execution of the group's leader, Abdulmalek Rigi, on June 20. – *BBC, July 16; AFP, July 15; New York Times, July 16*

July 16, 2010 (UNITED STATES): The U.S. Treasury Department blacklisted Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-`Awlaqi, identifying him as a "specially designated global terrorist." – *Reuters, July 16*

July 16, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A bomb ripped through a used car market in Khyber Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing six people. – *BBC, July 16*

July 17, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Gunmen shot to death 16 Shi`a Muslims in the Sunni-dominated Charkhel area of Kurram Agency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The victims were ambushed as they headed to Peshawar in two passenger vehicles. – *AFP, July 17*

July 17, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Two bombs exploded at a congested market in Lahore, the capital of Punjab Province, killing six people. Both bombs struck internet cafes. – *AFP, July 17*

July 18, 2010 (GLOBAL): A senior U.S. law enforcement official told CNN that the author of the new online al-Qa`ida magazine, *Inspire*, may be U.S. citizen Samir Khan, who previously lived in North Carolina and left for Yemen in October 2009. Khan, who is 23-years-old, has previously been involved in radical Islamist blogs, and he once lived in the New York area. – *CNN, July 18*

July 18, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber killed three people near a market in eastern Kabul. – *RTTNews, July 18; Washington Post, July 19*

July 18, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters blew up the gate to a jail and freed 23 insurgents in Farah Province. – *Reuters, July 18*

July 18, 2010 (IRAQ): Two suicide bombers killed at least 50 people in southwestern Baghdad. The bombers targeted members of a government-backed Sunni militia who were waiting to receive their paychecks outside a military base. – *BBC, July 18; Los Angeles Times, July 19*

July 18, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives at a Shi`a mosque in Sargodha, Punjab Province, wounding at least 15 people. – *Reuters, July 18*

July 19, 2010 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri purportedly released a new audio message, promising al-Qa`ida's followers victory in Afghanistan

and Iraq. Al-Zawahiri also said that the battle to liberate Jerusalem will eventually occur. - *CNN, July 20*

July 19, 2010 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into a convoy of armored SUVs in Mosul, Ninawa Province, killing one British security contractor. - *Guardian, July 19*

July 20, 2010 (GLOBAL): The United Nations blacklisted Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-`Awlaqi, identifying him as an al-Qa`ida operative. - *Reuters, July 20*

July 20, 2010 (UNITED KINGDOM): Eliza Manningham-Buller, the former head of MI5, harshly criticized the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, saying "we gave Osama bin Laden his Iraqi jihad, so that he was able to move into Iraq in a way that he was not before." Manningham-Buller, who was the head of MI5 from 2002-2007, also said, "Our involvement in Iraq radicalized, for want of a better word, a whole generation of young people—not a whole generation, a few among a generation—who saw our involvement in Iraq, on top of our involvement in Afghanistan, as being an attack on Islam." - *Christian Science Monitor, July 21*

July 20, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters beheaded six Afghan police officers in Baghlan Province. The Taliban denied that they beheaded the officers. - *al-Jazeera, July 21; AFP, July 21*

July 20, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Five militants attacked a military training center in Mardan, located in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province. As the fighters tried to enter the training facility, security forces opened fire, killing all five assailants. Three of the fighters wore suicide bomb vests. Four soldiers were wounded. - *AFP, July 19*

July 21, 2010 (UNITED STATES): U.S. authorities arrested Zachary Adam Chesser on charges of providing support to the al-Shabab terrorist group in Somalia. Chesser, who is from Fairfax County, Virginia, was turned away from a July 10 flight out of New York's John F. Kennedy airport after he was told he was on a "no-fly" list. Chesser, who is 20-years-old, also reportedly told federal agents that he

twice attempted to travel to Somalia to join al-Shabab. - *Bloomberg, July 21*

July 21, 2010 (MAURITANIA): A Mauritanian court sentenced Omar Sid'Ahmed Ould Hamma to 12 years in jail for kidnapping three Spanish aid workers and handing them over to al-Qa`ida. Hamma, a Malian national, was arrested by Mauritanian security forces in February. - *AFP, July 21*

July 21, 2010 (PHILIPPINES): U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs William Burns announced that U.S. troops will remain in the southern Philippines to help local security forces in their fight against Muslim extremists. According to Agence France-Presse, "About 500 US Special Forces troops train Filipino soldiers in Mindanao to combat militants from the Al-Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf group, which the United States lists as a terrorist organisation." - *AFP, July 21*

July 22, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Two U.S. soldiers were killed in a helicopter crash in Helmand Province. NATO forces are investigating the cause of the crash, while the Taliban said they shot down the aircraft. - *Los Angeles Times, July 23*

July 22, 2010 (SOMALIA): Somali officials admitted that members of the country's elite presidential guard had defected to the al-Shabab insurgent group. - *New York Times, July 22*

July 22, 2010 (MAURITANIA): Mauritanian commandos supported by the French military launched a raid on fighters belonging to al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The soldiers killed six AQIM members, while four militants managed to escape. Reports suggested that the goal of the operation was to free a 78-year-old French hostage, Michel Germaneau, a retired engineer who was kidnapped in neighboring Niger in April. Germaneau, however, was not found. - *Washington Post, July 23; AFP, July 22*

July 23, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Reports said that two U.S. soldiers were captured by Taliban fighters in Logar Province. Later, however, both soldiers were found dead. One of the soldiers appears to have been

killed in the initial firefight. It was not immediately clear if the second soldier died from wounds sustained during the initial firefight, or if he was executed by Taliban fighters. - *Los Angeles Times, July 30*

July 24, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb killed four U.S. soldiers in southern Afghanistan. - *BBC, July 24*

July 24, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. aerial drone killed at least 16 militants in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. - *BBC, July 24*

July 24, 2010 (NORTH AFRICA): Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) executed French national Michel Germaneau in revenge for the July 22 failed rescue raid by French and Mauritanian troops. - *BBC, July 26*

July 25, 2010 (IRAQ): New reports suggest that the Iraqi military arrested the minister of defense for the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), who has been identified as Saleem Khalid al-Zawbawi. Two other senior ISI leaders were also reportedly arrested. - *Bloomberg, July 25*

July 25, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. aerial drone strike left 10 suspected militants dead in the Shaktoi area of South Waziristan Agency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. - *BBC, July 26*

July 25, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. aerial drone strike killed four suspected militants in Srarogha, located in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. - *BBC, July 26*

July 25, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. aerial drone killed five suspected militants in Tabbi Tolkhel, located in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. - *BBC, July 26*

July 25, 2010 (YEMEN): Al-Qa`ida fighters killed six Yemeni troops in Shabwa Province. - *CNN, July 26*

July 25, 2010 (ALGERIA): A suicide bomber in a vehicle attacked members of the Algerian National Gendarmerie in Tizi Ouzou, killing one person.

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not of the U.S. Military Academy, the Department of the Army, or any other agency of the U.S. Government.

Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb later claimed credit for the attack. – *al-Bawaba*, July 25; *AFP*, July 29

July 26, 2010 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber in a vehicle attacked the Baghdad offices of al-Arabiya television, killing four people. The Islamic State of Iraq later took credit for the attack. – *AFP*, July 28

July 26, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber targeted a group of people mourning the death of a cabinet minister's son who was murdered in a suspected Taliban attack. The suicide blast killed seven people. It occurred near Peshawar. – *BBC*, July 26

July 27, 2010 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri purportedly released a new audiotape, threatening more attacks in the United States and in the West. "Oh American people... We offered you a peace plan, and mutual benefit; but your governments were proud and haughty, and so the attacks against you followed one after another, everywhere—from Indonesia to Times Square, by way of Madrid and London," the voice said. "And the attacks are ongoing, and more will come one after another." – *ABC News*, July 27

July 27, 2010 (FRANCE): French Prime Minister Francois Fillon reacted to the recent execution of French hostage Michel Germaneau by al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb, stating that France is "at war with al-Qa`ida." French President Nicolas Sarkozy vowed that the murder "will not go unpunished." – *Christian Science Monitor*, July 27

July 28, 2010 (UNITED STATES): Madhatta Haipe, a Philippine citizen who was a founding member of the al-Qa`ida-linked Abu Sayyaf Group, pled guilty in a U.S. court to the 1995 kidnappings of 16 people, including four U.S. citizens. Haipe was extradited to the United States in 2009. – *AFP*, July 28

July 28, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A bomb ripped through a crowded bus in Nimroz Province, killing 25 civilians on board. – *Los Angeles Times*, July 28

July 29, 2010 (IRAQ): Gunmen launched a coordinated attack on Iraqi soldiers in a predominately Sunni Baghdad neighborhood, killing at least six of them. The gunmen also briefly erected the flag of the insurgent group al-Qa`ida in Iraq near the destroyed army checkpoint. – *Washington Post*, July 30

July 29, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A new poll released by the Pew Research Center showed that nearly six in 10 Pakistanis described the United States as an enemy, and only one in 10 called it a partner. – *AP*, July 29

July 30, 2010 (GLOBAL): The United Nations removed five members of the Taliban from its sanctions blacklist. According to Voice of America, "Afghan President Hamid Karzai had been calling for the removal of at least 10 former Taliban members from the blacklist, as part of a reintegration plan for Taliban fighters willing to lay down their weapons." Two of those removed from the list are deceased. – *Voice of America*, July 30

July 30, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A bomb attached to a motorcycle exploded in Kandahar, killing a woman and a child. The target of the attack was a candidate in the country's upcoming parliamentary elections, yet the candidate was unharmed. – *News24.com*, July 30

July 31, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber killed a former militia commander who supported the Afghan government, in addition to two other people, in northern Afghanistan's Kunduz Province. – *AP*, July 31

July 31, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): At least 66 U.S. troops died in Afghanistan in July, making it the deadliest month for American forces in the country since the intervention began in 2001. As stated by the *Guardian*, "US and NATO commanders had warned that casualties would rise as the international military force ramped up the war against the Taliban, especially in the organisation's southern strongholds in Helmand and Kandahar provinces." – *Guardian*, July 30; *AP*, July 31