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VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH**



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Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis

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The Return of the Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan: Terrorism and Political Violence in Turkey in 2012

By Ahmed S. Hashim

The Kurdistan Workers Party or PKK which was on the decline since 2000, appears to be staging a violent comeback. This article traces the evolution of the PKK and its conflict with the Turkish government from 1978 to present.

In 2000, Turkey seemed to have definitely defeated a serious terrorist-insurgency threat posed by the ruthless *Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan* (PKK, or in English the Kurdistan Workers Party), an ethnic separatist movement dedicated to bringing about an independent state for the Kurds of Turkey. After years of large-scale terrorist activities and the waging of a rural insurgency in south-eastern Turkey since the mid-1980s, the movement suffered a series of crippling body blows beginning in 1998.

For almost a decade there was little violence and prospects for a political solution seemed high. The two decades of conflict and war had cost Turkey the loss of almost 40,000 lives and US\$300bn. It had constrained the growth of Turkey's lucrative tourism industry, the economic development and modernization of the backward south-eastern part of the country where most of the war had taken place. Furthermore, the war had damaged Turkey's image and may have contributed to the country's problems in acceding to

the European Union (EU). Not surprisingly, Turks and Kurds breathed a sigh of relief as the millennium was ushered in. However, beginning around 2007-2008, clashes began to occur between the Turkish security forces and a militarily revitalized PKK. This paper will trace the evolution of the PKK and its conflict with the Turkish government from 1978 to the present.

Historical Background

The Kurds, an Indo-Aryan speaking group of people, inhabiting the Middle East constitute the single largest ethnic group in the world without a state of their own. With anywhere between 20-25 million people, they live in a huge swathe of territory ranging from north-western Iran through northern Iraq to south-eastern Turkey and north-eastern Syria. They have been a source of trouble in each state. Their capacity for sustained violence --- from terrorism to insurgency --- has been magnified by the fact that the territories they



Map showing the areas populated by Kurds.

Source: Rich Clabaugh/
Christian Science Monitor

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/1217/Cynicism-drives-young-Kurds-away-from-government-outreach-toward-rebellion>

RICH CLABAUGH/STAFF

inhabit are almost contiguous with one another. This has allowed rebellious Kurdish groups to seek sanctuary in other Kurdish territories, often to the chagrin and discomfort of local Kurds. Moreover, the remoteness and mountainous terrain of their territories have made it difficult for the host governments to deal with the Kurdish terrorists and guerrillas death-blows.

In 1978, Abdullah Ocalan – a charismatic and ruthless individual of Kurdish and Turkish ancestry and from a very poor socioeconomic background -- and a group of political science students and drop-outs from Ankara University department of political science met in a remote village in south-eastern Turkey to form the PKK. Its major goal was the creation of an independent Kurdish state to be carved out of Turkish territory. They were motivated by grievances – real and perceived – of the large Turkish-Kurdish minority. While Kurds could rise to the highest ranks in the Turkish state and make it big in the private sector, many Kurds felt that the state discriminated against them as a minority because of the strong ‘unitary state’ ethos of the post-Ottoman Kemalist nationalist edifice. In this context, there was no recognition of the Kurds as a minority ethnic group and no acceptance of specifically Kurdish cultural and political rights.

These were the factors behind the emergence of the PKK. At the time of its foundation, it was a relatively insignificant group, and the Kurdish political landscape was dominated by other more established groups seeking rights, autonomy, or outright independence for Kurds. The PKK became more popular because it was action-oriented and ruthless. Furthermore, a military coup in 1980 which established a military government witnessed the dismantling of the other Kurdish groups as well as other political movements of the left and right.

The PKK was new and more clandestine, thus little was known about it at that stage. Moreover, it was effective because it was divided into two

separate but related wings: a political wing responsible for the dissemination of its Maoist ideology which called for winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of the down-trodden Kurdish peasantry, waging war against the established Kurdish conservative elite and against the Turkish state. The PKK’s military wing, the National Liberation Army of Kurdistan (ARGK) - replaced KAWA (a more popular Kurdish political party seeking an independent Kurdish state) was due to four factors: the 1980 military coup, Kurdish grievances, PKK violence and state violence. The 1980 military coup saw most of the KAWA leadership killed. In contrast, Ocalan and a few key supporters fled to Syria, where they spent the next four years preparing for their war.

By the end of 1980, however, Ocalan's PKK had gained a reputation for political extremism and violence. Following traditional Leninist theory, the PKK viewed rival parties and organizations as unwelcome competition to its own future political and military hegemony over the Kurdish population in south-eastern Turkey. Therefore, the early PKK spent as much time fighting rival Kurdish groups as it did the Turkish military in a bid to dominate the political landscape. When the PKK's armed campaign began in 1984, Leninist principles were still very prominent. Those considered to be state collaborators were ruthlessly killed - often with their entire families. As a result, the PKK made little headway during the early years of its rebellion in terms of gaining widespread political support among the Kurdish community as a whole. It took the combination of a harsh counter-insurgency programme by the Turkish military, a softening of the PKK's attitude to village guards (an amnesty was announced in 1992) and Kurdish resentment of Ankara's policies - or lack of them - to change the situation.

In March 1998, Semdin Sakik, a senior PKK commander was captured in northern Iraq. He provided useful information for a successful Turkish military offensive – “Operation Murat” –

into northern Iraq against a powerful 500-man PKK guerrilla force. At about the same time, the leaders of the Kurdish autonomous region in northern Iraq decided to kick the PKK out of their territory for a number of reasons. The autonomous region was insecure and had suffered from severe internecine violence between the rival Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) over resources and the question of whose writ was to rule over Iraqi Kurdistan. The PKK was interfering in the political process of Iraqi Kurds; this aroused the ire of the Iraqi Kurdish leadership.

Observers of the complicated multi-layered conflict estimated that at one time northern Iraq constituted as a safe-haven for a formidable force of 4,000 seasoned PKK guerrillas. Such a force had political and military clout and caused the Iraqi Kurds elite considerable unease. For both Turkey and the United States – both countries were being courted by the autonomous Iraqi Kurdish region – the PKK was a terrorist group with the blood of innocent civilians on its hands. Regular Turkish incursions into northern Iraq to root out PKK terrorists did nothing to enhance the stability of the autonomous region. Finally, a solution with Turkey at the expense of the PKK was also necessary for the Iraqi Kurds to have

access to the outside world as Turkey was the only stable conduit for the conduct of trade and commercial activities for Iraqi Kurdistan.

In 1999, the PKK suffered its biggest debacle when its leader, Abdullah Ocalan, hitherto ensconced in comfort in Syria was forced out due to intense Turkish pressure on Damascus. He was on the run and lost contact with his movement as he tried desperately to stay one step ahead of the vengeful Turkish government which was determined to bring him to justice for two decades of violence. The denouement came when apparently U.S. intelligence aid led Turkish intelligence to his latest hide-out in Nairobi, Kenya. Ocalan was seeking sanctuary in the Greek Embassy; Ankara pressed Athens to surrender him. He was finally apprehended, flown to Turkey where he was put on trial and sentenced to death.

During the trial he ‘apologized’ abjectly for the violent path of his movement and issued a *mea culpa*. His death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment despite the opposition of nationalist Turkish parties and civilians who had lost loved ones during the decades of terrorism and insurgency. While in prison, Ocalan made some startling statements and wrote a book in which



The current leader of the PKK, Murat Karayilan during an interview with the BBC published on 15 October 2012.

Photo credit: BBC News

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-19946616>

he called upon the PKK to lay down its arms and join the political process. The PKK seemingly began the process of transforming itself – as well as changing its name – into a political party. Ankara entered into a series of intense bilateral talks with the PKK representatives with the aid of Turkish Kurdish politicians working within the political system in Ankara. Turkey under the Islamist-dominated The Justice and Development Party (AKP) government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, genuinely desired a political resolution for the situation so that it could concentrate on its expansive political and socio-economic programs of turning Turkey into a regional powerhouse. Many Turks and Kurds also wanted a settlement of the issue.

But as it turned out, the Kurdish problem was not resolved. By 2008, violence which had been at a low ebb since 1999 returned with a vengeance. The commander of the new PKK, Murat Karayilan, who is based in a remote region where the borders of Iran, Iraq and Turkey meet, has stated on several occasions that the solution offered by the Turkish state is not enough. The Turkish state and the PKK found themselves embroiled once again in fighting which had risen to significant levels by mid-2012. Scarcely a day goes by without clashes between Turkish security forces and the PKK.

Indeed, in 2012, the violence entered its bloodiest phase since the height of the conflict in the 1990s. The PKK has launched significant assaults on isolated army outposts in south-eastern Turkey and engaged in extensive fire-fights with Turkish units. This signals an alarming improvement in the training and capabilities of the PKK rural guerrillas. Turkish military and security forces have responded with devastating counter-assaults that have often killed dozens of guerrillas; but it seems that Turkey has allowed its significant counter-insurgency experiences and capabilities that had been honed to a high level by 2000 to atrophy.

After the seeming defeat of the PKK by 2000, Turkey returned to building a formidable high-intensity conventional military capability to face off any regional adversary. Moreover, the PKK is not limiting itself to rural guerrilla war; it has returned to its old ways of conducting terror attacks on hapless civilians in urban areas and of massacring off-duty or unarmed members of the Turkish security services. There are ominous signs that some of the tactics, techniques and procedures associated with Iraq and Afghanistan are making their way into Turkey. In August 2012, a car-bomb in the town of Gaziantep killed nine people. The PKK claimed responsibility for it. In this context, Ankara has to revitalise both its counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism capabilities to ensure that it is not merely reacting to the revived PKK.

The regional external environment is critical in shaping the trajectory of this conflict. The establishment of a now prosperous *de facto* independent Kurdish region in northern Iraq has excited the imagination of many Turkish Kurds. The fact that Turkey is the biggest commercial partner of the Iraqi Kurds has not been lost on the Turkish Kurds, some of whom believe that Ankara would reconcile itself to an autonomous region in south-eastern Anatolia in the end. The civil war in Syria has worsened matters because a besieged Bashar al-Assad has provided aid to the PKK. Also, he has withdrawn Syrian forces from the Syrian Kurdish region bordering Turkey and Iraq and thus allowing the PKK sanctuary on Syrian territory. The Kurdish issue has thus acted to complicate Turkish moves vis-à-vis the intransigent regime in Damascus.

The violence in 2012, prompted warnings from Turkish Prime Minister, that operations against the armed separatist PKK would continue despite international and domestic criticism. Therefore, he added that Turkey was determined to find a peaceful and democratic solution to the grievances of the substantial Kurdish minority within the framework of a unified Turkey. The on

-going fighting in 2012, underlines the government's determination to try to bring an end to the PKK's insurgency and terrorist activities. However, Ankara must beware of the seeming attraction and simplicity of a purely military solution. When faced with internal political violence, most governments make the fatal error of lashing out militarily without thinking of the consequences. This will not work; Turkey must adopt a two-pronged strategy, firstly by offering full political and socioeconomic integration and rights for its Kurdish citizens – not as individuals since Kurds do not face discrimination at that level. Secondly, the implementation of finely-tuned counter-insurgent and counter-terrorist campaigns to strangle the PKK's guerrilla and terrorist assaults on the security and stability of Turkey.

Ahmed S. Hashim is an Associate Professor at ICPVTR.

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The Surge in “Green-on-Blue” Attacks in Afghanistan

By Lisa M. Allen

Insider attacks in Afghanistan, labeled “green-on-blue” attacks, have surged in 2012, causing experts and officials to question their origin, as well as their implications for Western troops.

Defining the Issue

Green-on-blue attacks have increased considerably within the past two years, and comprise 14 percent of coalition casualties thus far in 2012, according to the Foundation for Defense of Democracies' *Long War Journal*. In recent months these attacks have increased significantly, attracting the attention of high-level Western and Afghan government officials. Though statistically small compared to the number of Improvised Explosive Device (IED)-related deaths, green-on-blue attacks make up 20 percent of the casualties among the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF). These attacks can drastically affect the strategy in Afghanistan, such as the decision by coalition authorities to suspend training for new Afghan recruits working with U.S. Special Operations forces last month and temporarily halt

the majority of joint patrols and small-unit ground operations with Afghan forces.

The phrase “green on blue” is a derivative of an earlier phrase, “blue-on-blue,” referring to inadvertent firing upon one’s own or otherwise friendly forces, sometimes called “friendly fire.” The phrase blue-on-blue was coined in the early 1980s by the British military and spread beyond the military arena to even describe accidental shootings among police officers. The “green” and “blue” troops one thinks of today are based on the standardized military symbols used to indicate different forces on tactical maps. The color blue is used for friendly forces, green for neutral forces, yellow for unknown forces, and red for hostile forces. Consequently, blue-on-blue shootings are incidents in which members of the same force fire upon one another, and green-on-blue



NATO Member State	Number Killed	Number Wounded
Albania	1	0
Australia	8	11
France	9	16
Germany	3	6
Italy	1	3
Norway	0	2
Spain	2	0
United Kingdom	23	10
United States	60	36
Unknown	9	2
Total	116	88

Number of green-on-blue killings and breakdown by NATO member states.

Source: The New America Foundation

<http://data.newamerica.net/showcase/rapid-mapping-green-blue-attacks>

are incidents in which a neutral force, such as Afghan security forces, fires upon the friendly force. Local security forces in a situation such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan in which they are not considered hostile, but are not fully allies, are regarded as neutral and therefore green.

Historical Precedent of Green-on-Blue Attacks

Many journalists, scholars, and government officials are grappling with the motivation and potential historical precedent of green-on-blue attacks, in order to determine the optimal strategy going forward in Afghanistan. Several experts have commented on the matter, stating that these kinds of attacks are not anomalous and should even be expected. In March of this year, General John Allen, the ISAF commander in Afghanistan, stated, *“We should expect that this will occur in counter-insurgency operations, and as we saw it in Iraq and as we’ve seen it historically in counter-insurgencies, but also in Vietnam. It is a characteristic of this kind of warfare.”* In *The National Interest* Paul Pillar recently wrote,

“We are seeing an almost inevitable by-product of the long-term conduct of mili-

tary operations on someone else’s soil, especially when the someone else is of a markedly different culture...The costs of such sentiments manifest themselves not only as lethal attacks among ostensible allies on military bases, and such sentiments are not unique to the war in Afghanistan.”

Roger D. Carstens stated in *Foreign Policy* on 21 September 2012,

“For the record, the problem of insider attacks is not out of the ordinary nor is it unique to Afghanistan. As a Special Forces instructor, I used to train U.S. Special Forces personnel to work with indigenous forces and to expect that some may turn on them during the course of training or combat.”

General James Mattis, the top U.S. commander in the Middle East, affirmed that such *“treachery always has been part of warfare throughout history.”* Others have described this style of attacks as unprecedented. Tom Engelhardt from the Los Angeles Times stated,

“There is nothing in our historical record faintly comparable, no war in which our



U.S. and Afghan forces side-by-side.

Photo credit: The Atlantic Wire

<http://www.theatlanticwire.com/global/2012/09/latest-insider-attack-marks-2000th-us-death-afghan-war/57435/>

‘native’ allies have turned the weapons we supply on our forces in anything like these numbers...It didn’t happen in the 18th and 19th century Indian wars, in the Philippine insurrection at the turn of the last century, in Korea during the early 1950s, Vietnam in the 1960s and early 1970s, or Iraq in this century.”

Nick Mills, an associate professor of journalism who served in the US Army as a photographer in Vietnam, recalled, *“To the best of my knowledge the sort of ‘green on blue’ attacks on the Western troops in Afghanistan have no parallel in recent military history.”* General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff who commanded American soldiers during the Iraq war, said that while British troops experienced similar assaults in the 19th century in Afghanistan, the attacks were a new phenomenon for American forces.

It is apparent that some experts believe that this style of attack has never occurred in American history, and could possibly be absent from military history altogether. Others are diametrically opposed to this view, claiming that the U.S. military is very familiar with attacks such as these and should expect them as a by-product of combat. These differing views could be the result of bias on both sides resulting in an attempt to spin the state of the war in Afghanistan and therefore propose differing reasons for and solutions to the issue of green-on-blue attacks.

Motivation and Prognosis

As many disagree on whether there has been a historical precedent or not. Experts are also divided on the cause of such insider attacks. While many believe that the insider attack is typically the result of a sort of “clash of cultures,” others point to the Taliban and say that these attacks are by and large the result of infiltrations within the Afghan security forces. According to Afghanistan’s deputy foreign minister, Jawed

Ludin, the culture clash explanation is “vastly overstated” and “ignores the fact” that Afghan and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces have fought side by side for more than a decade. Ludin said that infiltration is not a new phenomenon, and should not be a barrier to cooperation with properly vetted Afghan forces. He linked the rise in green-on-blue attacks to the large recruitment and perhaps insufficient vetting of new Afghan security forces. According to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, ISAF commanders estimate that at least 15 percent of the green-on-blue attacks are the work of Taliban infiltrators. Most likely a combination of many factors are to blame, from Taliban involvement, to cultural and religious misunderstandings, to personal grievances.

Many in the media are purporting that these attacks may lead to a quickened drawdown in Afghanistan, but this seems unlikely as many Western troops have resumed patrols with their Afghan “allies,” and are formulating plans to enhance security and vetting processes. As General Mattis recently stated, *“What we won’t do is, we’re not going to pull back.”*

Lisa M. Allen holds an MSc in the History of International Relations from the London School of Economics and a certificate in Terrorism Studies from the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at the University of St. Andrews. She works as a consultant in Washington, D.C..

New Challenges for Bangladesh

By Iftekharul Bashar

Bangladesh is facing new challenges. Rohingya migration, communal and ethnic tensions could threaten long term security and stability of the country.

Bangladesh faces numerous security challenges. Firstly, the illegal immigration of the Rohingyas from Myanmar is putting additional pressure on Bangladesh's infrastructure and resources and contributing to an increase in criminal activities. Secondly, Bangladesh's south-eastern part has witnessed an unprecedented level of communal violence affecting the Buddhist and Hindu minorities. Thirdly, the banned Islamist outfit Hizb ut-Tahrir and other extremist groups continue to radicalize Bangladeshi youth through effective internet campaigns. Lastly, the major political parties are unable to control their student wings, which frequently engage in violent inter party and intra-party clashes. These student groups have access to illegal small arms of both local and foreign origin.

Rohingya Refugees and Illegal Migrants

As Bangladesh shares a porous border with Western Myanmar, the communal violence that took place in the Rakhine state in June 2012 (and later in October 2012) has affected Bangladesh. The Rohingyas are trying to cross the border and

intrude into Bangladeshi territory for shelter and a better life.

Since June to August 2012, at least 2,260 intrusions have been recorded by authorities in Bangladesh. Most of them have been sent back as the government has taken a stance against allowing Rohingya refugees inside its territory.

Though Bangladesh has never signed any kind of international treaty or convention for allowing and giving shelter to refugees, it has been sheltering Rohingya refugees since 1978 on humanitarian consideration. Currently 30,225 registered Rohingya refugees are living in Bangladesh in two different camps. However, the illegal immigrants outnumber the same in huge margins. According to an estimate, currently 418,000 Rohingyas are living in Bangladesh.

The communal violence in Myanmar is one of the major reasons driving illegal migration into Bangladesh. Facilities provided by the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOS) are seen



A Bangladeshi Buddhist monk checks the remains of burned religious books at a temple which was torched in an overnight attack in Ramu.

Photo credit: A. M. Ahad/Associated Press

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2012/10/01/bangladesh-buddists-muslims-facebook.html>

by many Bangladeshis as a factor incentivizing Rohingya immigration as well. Moreover, many young Rohingyas view Bangladesh as a gateway to a better life in Western countries. But statistics show so far only 851 Rohingyas have been resettled in a third country.

On its own, Bangladesh is also facing tremendous challenges in terms of handling the influx of illegal Rohingya migrants. Already an overpopulated country, Bangladesh, cannot absorb the stream of immigration.

Failing to get legal employment, Rohingyas are increasingly getting involved in trafficking of narcotics and other criminal activities. As the Rohingyas are familiar with the border terrain, it is easier for them to procure supplies from Myanmar and sell it in large cities, such as Dhaka and Chittagong. The Bangladeshi government links the increasing flow of narcotics to increasing influx of Rohingyas. The Rohingya women are especially being used as carriers.

The Rohingya crisis also has a deeper impact going beyond Bangladesh and Myanmar. Several jihadi groups operating in South Asia, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia (such as the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, the Afghan Taliban, and the Jemaah Islamiah (JI)) seemed to be active in using the Rohingya issue to incite the community for jihad in the region. The 22 July 2012 letter of the jailed Indonesian Islamist cleric and leader of JI, Abu Bakar Bashir, is a case in point. Addressing the President of Myanmar, Thein Sein, Bashir threatened to wage jihad against Myanmar, if the government continues to harm Muslim Rohingyas.

Communal Violence in the South-eastern Region

Meanwhile, Bangladesh witnessed one of the worst incidents of communal violence in its history. On 30 September 2012, at least 12 religious shrines and 100 homes belonging to the

country's minority Buddhist and Hindu communities were attacked by unidentified miscreants in south-eastern Bangladesh. The attacks took place in Ramu, Ukhia, Patiya and Teknaf areas in Chittagong division. The shrines include some century-old pagodas, most revered by the Bangladeshis. The violence was apparently triggered by a Facebook posting of a photo defaming the holy Quran. At least 300 arrests have taken place after the incident. Bangladeshi government has deployed additional forces to protect the shrines as well as areas inhabited by religious minorities.

Meanwhile, the local police and the civil administration in Chittagong division have come under serious criticism for failing to prevent the incident. Bangladesh has formed committees at the local level that will act as watchdogs authorized to take steps to prevent repeat of such violence and ensure peace and communal harmony in their respective localities. The committees, comprising members of all communities, will be formed at different tiers in the district. The civil society organizations have urged the government to carry out a fully transparent investigation by forming a judicial enquiry commission.

Radicalization of the Urban Youth

The banned Islamist outfit Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh (HTB) increased its activity in 2012. It remained active in spite of a large number of arrests that have taken place this year. The HTB is focusing on particular urban localities in Dhaka. The threat emanating from this global outfit has become a major concern for Bangladeshi law enforcement agencies. The outfit has managed to radicalize a small but significant segment of the urban youth, especially from the affluent class of the society. The propaganda capacity of HTB is higher than any of the other such groups in Bangladesh. The group has a website which provides their narrative on a range of domestic, regional and global issues which has a deep impact on a segment of the

urban youth.

Student Politics, Armed Cadres and Clashes

Bangladesh is witnessing an increasing number of clashes within and between the student wings of the major political parties. The parties have failed to control their respective student wings which have been factionalized. These student wings have access to small arms which they frequently use not only for setting scores but also in various criminal activities such as murder and extortion. The law enforcement agencies often find it hard to check such criminals as they have 'political connections.' Cadres of different political groups have been buying smuggled small firearms of both local and foreign origin. This reflects the overall deterioration of law and order in Bangladesh.

Proliferation of Small Arms

There is an increasing use of small firearms in different criminal activities, including murder, robbery and extortion. Due to domestic demand, the smuggling of firearms from across the border has increased. In the capital, Dhaka, 40 syndicates are known to have been operating to deal with illegal fire arms. These syndicates keep constant contacts with the gunrunners

from across the border. According to media reports, Indian-made small arms named as 'Belgharia', 'Moyur' and 'Chhakka' are being smuggled into the country through the south-western border. Besides, single shooter gun, revolver, pistol, and rifle also enter into the country through the north-eastern border. There are also locally manufactured small arms. There are nearly 400,000 unauthorized firearms in the country.

Changes in the Nature of Militancy

Overall, militancy remains under control due to rapid response from the counter-terrorism agencies. The terrorist threat in Bangladesh was limited to Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami Bangladesh (HuJI-B) and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen (JMB). However, there are concerns that these groups will manipulate the deterioration of law and order to their advantage. The JMB has not been successful in carrying out terrorist attacks as of October 2012. According to some reports, the JMB was trying to regroup the Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar. This attempt however has been thwarted. There are concerns about the residual capacity of the groups in Bangladesh. The command and control structure of both the JMB and HuJI-B are reportedly changing in response to the increased policing. The groups that have a



A Bangladeshi security personnel guards a Buddhist temple which was torched in an attack in Ramu in the coastal district of Cox's Bazar, on 1 October 2012.

Photo credit: A. M. Ahad/
Associated Press

<http://www.thestate.com/2012/10/01/2464741/the-daily-edit10022012.html#.UJDxJGfVpsk>

vertical command and control structure have shifted towards a more horizontal structure in which smaller, efficient and more lethal cells will be the main actors.

Despite robust counter-terrorism initiative challenges remain for Bangladesh. The government will have to face the challenges and continue to scale up its initiatives in building the country's counter-terrorism capacity. For building resilience in the long-term, it is important that the country develops its response in the non-kinetic domain and takes pragmatic initiatives for economic and social development. The current counter-terrorism initiatives need to be supplemented with better opportunities for the youth, improvement in the quality of education and reforms in key areas of governance. In addition, the government needs to make a credible and comprehensive effort to control the violence caused by communalism and confrontational politics.

Iftekharul Bashar is an Associate Research Fellow at ICPVTR.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The CTTA: Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis is now open for contributions from researchers and practitioners in the field of terrorism research, security, and other related fields.

Topical areas of interest are terrorism and political violence, organized crime, homeland security, religion and violence, internal conflicts and all other areas of security broadly defined.

Article length could be anywhere between 1,000 to 2,000 words. Submissions must be made before the 15th of every month for editing purposes and for inclusion in the next month's edition. Please refer to the [guidelines](#).

Electronic copies of the articles (MS Word format) may be submitted to the Associate Editor, Nadisha Sirisena at the following address:
issirisena@ntu.edu.sg

Mentoring Task Force Four (MTF -Four) in Uruzgan Province: An Interview with Lt. Col. Kahlil Fegan

By Sergei DeSilva-Ranasinghe

In June 2012, Lieutenant Colonel Kahlil Fegan, the commander of MTF-Four in Afghanistan discussed with Sergei DeSilva-Ranasinghe the function of the MTF-Four, how the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is preparing its troop contingents for service in Afghanistan, efforts to bolster the 4th Brigade and the nature of the Taliban threat in Uruzgan Province.

Uruzgan Province, situated north of both Helmand and Kandahar Provinces, remains an important transit route for the Taliban hence has witnessed much fighting. As the Australian Defence Force (ADF) inches closer to the drawdown date from Afghanistan in 2014, the Mentoring Task Force (MTF) engages the Taliban, and conducts advisory and mentoring programmes with Afghan security forces.

Sergei DeSilva-Ranasinghe: Explain the role of the MTF in Uruzgan?

Kahlil Fegan: The role of MTF-Four is to assist the development of the Afghan National Army (ANA) 4th Brigade in Uruzgan Province. The MTF is Australia's largest contribution to the global war on terrorism in Afghanistan. I command a large and diverse tri-service organisation with contributions from 49 different units from across the ADF. The core of MTF-Four is based on the 8/9 Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment which is on its first-ever wartime deployment. The Battalion has around 800 troops on any given day depending on attachments and detachments. Some of the specialist capabilities, such as explosive ordnance detection and disposal teams are provided from the navy and air force.

The 4th Brigade is the main security provider in Uruzgan Province. The formation was raised as part of the development of the 205 Corps, known as the Hero Corps, specifically to conduct operations in Uruzgan and neighbouring regions. It is the only formation of the ANA in the Province, with the exception of the ANA commando battalion: the 8th Kandak, which operates independent-

ly of the 4th Brigade.

Over the last four years there's been a subtle evolution in the MTF supporting the 4th Brigade. A few years ago, Australian soldiers were constantly well forward and intimately involved in controlling the close fight alongside the ANA soldiers. In most cases, it was us in control and the ANA very much in a supportive role. However, over the years, and under Australian tutelage, the ANA has developed skills, confidence and capabilities to take more control. The MTF has remained positioned to support them when required, but this requirement is now decreasing.

The MTF have a permanent presence in seven ANA patrol bases at the moment. The more isolated ANA bases have anywhere between 40 to 80 MTF soldiers. The process of drawing down has commenced in a number of those patrol bases: but we still maintain a mobile mentoring capacity throughout Uruzgan to maintain situational awareness, quality assurance and ensure there is no degradation of the ANA. If we observe that ANA offensive operations have decreased, we will reinsert ourselves to provide assistance to ensure no ground is conceded to the Taliban. We visit these isolated patrol bases from anywhere between a few days to a number of weeks, depending on the situation.

With regard to how we support the ANA: we cannot be a 'crutch'. The ANA need to be able to procure their own food, ammunition, fuel, generators and other essential stores, without having to rely on coalition forces. This is part of developing their independent capabilities. The challenge for

our soldiers is that they do build an empathetic affiliation, so when there is a problem they want to assist them. This is a natural Australian response, but whenever possible we do need to let the ANA resolve their own problems. For example, what do you do when the generator that powers the ANA fridge breaks down at night and their meat for the next day rots? Theoretically, we should let the ANA resolve their broken fridge using their own system. However, in this situation how can we sit in the same patrol base eating fresh meat while theirs is rotten? The challenge is realising when to assist and when to let the ANA resolve the problem in an Afghan way. This challenge applies to everything we do with the ANA.

Sergei: How important is cultural intelligence to each MTF deployment in Afghanistan?

Kahlil: In a complex operational environment like Afghanistan, soldiers today have to be smarter and more adaptive than in the past to comprehend many more challenges. There are some significant cultural differences between an ancient Islamic country and a young Western country. Therefore, we have to place heavy emphasis on ensuring that our soldiers understand cultural differences, and understand Afghan society and culture so they are prepared.

Although, Iraq provided our soldiers a good exposure to an Islamic country; the ADFs experience in East Timor prepared us better. This is because many of my young MTF commanders and soldiers have had recent experience with another culture and in operating in a mentoring capacity. Most of my soldiers have had experience in Southeast Asia, and were deployed before to East Timor, and worked with other armies that don't share a common language. They are increasingly familiar with working with interpreters and picking up local languages. As a result, the language barrier for a large proportion of my soldiers is much less of a challenge than it could otherwise have been.

Sergei: Tell us about evolution of the 4th Brigade and its capability to operate independently?

Kahlil: 4th Brigade recruits its soldiers from all over Afghanistan: very few of its soldiers actually come from Uruzgan itself. This is an advantage as the soldiers don't have family or tribal affiliations that could potentially compromise or corrupt them. They are considered a lot more trustworthy than other organizations. Tribal tensions in the ANA are nowhere near an issue as they are in other Afghan organizations. Approximately 50 per cent of the 4th Brigade is ethnic-Tajik and the Pashtun representation is around 45 per cent. The rest are a mixture of Hazaras and Uzbeks. However, outside of the 4th Brigade, the 8th Kandak commando's, which operate independently in Uruzgan, are predominantly ethnic-Hazara.

The 4th Brigade has made quantum leaps in their development over the last few years. However, there are still some irreplaceable capabilities that we need to provide. For example, as they don't have these capabilities, they look to us for the provision of offensive support such as attack helicopters and artillery. Similarly, the ANA's logistical and maintenance capabilities can quickly become stretched. Also, extraction of their casualties from remote locations is extremely difficult.

Another high priority area we focus on is developing explosive hazard awareness training and counter-Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) training. We do this via what we call 'train the trainer' packages. In essence, we train the Afghan instructors who then train their soldiers. In the last five months alone we have trained a critical mass of counter-IED personnel who are now training their own soldiers. It's proven very effective and there has been a drop in ANA casualties from IEDs as a result. The next challenge is ensuring they have appropriate equipment and knowledge to maintain it. Ultimately,

we need to ensure that they can sustain themselves as long as required.

Without doubt, the ability of the 4th Brigade to operate independently is improving and so has their capabilities and confidence. The best way we can further develop the ANA is to give effective training and mentoring, including more opportunities to act independently. We are always positioned to ensure they don't fail or an opportunity is not lost when confronted by the enemy. For want of a better term, I call it 'shadowing' – in other words I want my troops in the shadows and the ANA in the spotlight. This is a difficult balance as we don't want to leave the ANA exposed, but we want to ensure they are best positioned to exploit any opportunity.

The MTF soldiers have come up with some ingenious mechanisms to shadow their ANA counterparts. Some patrols will sit down with the ANA, who have been given the responsibility to come up with their patrol plan. The Australian mentors will say, "We'll follow you on the high ground, and if you get into trouble, that is where we are." Conversely, other MTF soldiers will just follow behind. Some will go out before the Afghans, and might set up an over-watch position, to observe how the ANA conduct an operation.

Today, approximately up to 80 per cent of ANA operations are considered independent: meaning they are conceived, planned and executed by the ANA. These operations may include anything from a routine re-supply trip to a more complex operation against the enemy. It's now common for ANA soldiers to rapidly deploy from a patrol base without our knowledge as a result of information they have been provided. This demonstrates their increased confidence, capability and willingness to operate independently. It is significantly better than in the past and our job is to ensure they continue to improve.

In the short term, we will continue to push forward as necessary to set them up for success

now and into the future. By 2014, ADF involvement is likely to be reduced and concentrated on providing higher level enablers only; on supporting the brigade headquarters and specialist training support. I am confident that at the lower levels, the ANA will be operating quite effectively and independently at an Afghan standard.

Sergei: What is the status of the Taliban threat to Uruzgan today?

Kahlil: Operationally, the MTF is still busy, particularly as we come into this year's fighting season. Our mentors have very good force protection requirements which we are absolutely ruthless about enforcing. But there always is that 'insider threat' and some isolated incidents in the past have led to our soldiers being tragically killed. As a result, we are extremely conscious of it. While I have been here, we haven't had any confirmed cases of Taliban infiltration.

The Taliban remains a prevalent and dangerous threat. Its weapon of choice is the IED, which maims soldiers and civilians alike. Since January 2012, MTF-Four has participated in hundreds of operational incidents. We are still conducting similar numbers of patrols in comparison to this time last year. However, the number of what we call 'significant actions' are much less than in previous years. This implies that the Taliban are less prevalent and less effective than in the past.

Prior to the ADF involvement in Uruzgan, the vast majority of the region, over 90 per cent, would have had a strong Taliban influence. Areas like Khas Uruzgan, Charchinay and Langar were dominated by the Taliban, and their influence on the locals was evident. Today, however, the influence of the Taliban has been reduced significantly. With some assistance from us, the 4th Brigade can operate and launch operations into practically every valley in Uruzgan. The trick though, is to make sure that when they leave an area, stability prevails. This is where

the Afghan police need to step in.

Taliban influence in the province will increase and decrease depending on the season. During the winter, the Taliban presence is minimal, and encounters are generally with small groups of two to five insurgents. During the traditional summer fighting season, they start to come back into the region in larger numbers, and they could mass up to 20 insurgents at any one time for a specific action. This however is uncommon.

When we take a broader view of Uruzgan, it is evident that insurgents' influence and their numbers have definitely decreased. Their freedom of action and movement have been restricted. To ensure it remains that way, the Afghan security forces must continue that unrelenting pressure on the Taliban. The trick for us is to ensure that the 4th Brigade is set up for success and best positioned to apply this pressure for as long as required, and potentially long after the MTF has drawn back from the valleys.

Sergei DeSilva-Ranasinghe is a security analyst, defence writer and a Visiting Fellow at the National Security Institute, University of Canberra.

GLOBAL PATHFINDER

The ICPVTR Terrorism Database – Global Pathfinder - is a one-stop repository for information on the current and emerging terrorist threats. The database focuses on terrorism and political violence in the Asia-Pacific region – comprising of Southeast Asia, North Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and Oceania.

Global Pathfinder is an integrated database containing comprehensive profiles of terrorist groups, key terrorist personalities, terrorist and counter-terrorist incidents as well as terrorist training camps. It also contains specific details and analyses of significant terrorist attacks in the form of terrorist attack profiles.

For further inquiries regarding subscription and access to the Global Pathfinder database, please email Ms. Elena Ho Wei Ling at the following email address: isewlho@ntu.edu.sg

REVIEW ARTICLE: *Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It?* Robert A. Pape and James K. Feldman, Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010, pp.360

By Srinivas Gopal

After his earlier book on suicide terrorism "Dying to Win – Strategic Logic of suicide terrorism", Robert Pape has written a second book with James Feldman, analyzing the causes of suicide terrorism.

A well-written book covering suicide attacks all over the world from 1983 to 2009, it offers a fresh insight into causes of suicide terrorism. It points out that contrary to widely held opinion that Islamic fundamentalism was responsible for this phenomenon, the principal cause of suicide terrorism is resistance to foreign occupation. In the 24 year, period from 1980 to 2003, there were just under 350 suicide terrorist attacks around the world of which fewer than 15% could reasonably be considered as directed against the Americans. By contrast, in the six year period from 2004 to 2009, there were 1,833 attacks of which 92% were anti-American in origin. From an average of three per year in the 1980s, the suicide attacks had increased to ten per year in the 1990s and then to 50 per year from 2000 to 2003 and to 300 per year from 2004 to 2009.

Research had shown that none of the suicide attackers could be diagnosed as mentally ill. While many may have been religious, they emerged from communities resisting foreign military occupation. From 1980 to 2003, there were 345 completed suicide terror attacks by 524 suicide terrorists who actually killed themselves but were secular. Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam was the world leader in suicide terror but was secular. A third of suicide attacks in predominantly Muslim countries were carried out by secular terrorist groups like PKK or Kurdistan Workers Party in Turkey.

Before 2004, over 95% of the attacks were to compel a democratic state to withdraw combat

forces threatening territories valued by the terrorists. 87% of the 1,800 attacks which took place since 2004 were against the stationing of combat forces (both ground and tactical air force units). 12% of the attacks were directed against the Pakistani forces in the western tribal regions of Pakistan since the Pakistani combat forces allied with the U.S. troops in Afghanistan were occupying the tribal region.

From 1995 to 2003, 71 suicide terrorists killed themselves on a mission for Al Qaeda. Of these 44 or 62% came from Saudi Arabia or other Muslim countries with American troops stationed in their soil. 13 (18%) came from Muslim countries most of whose tyrannical regimes are supported by the U.S..

Three of the 9/11 suicide attackers Abu Al Jaraah Al Gamidi, Abu Musab Walid Al Shehri and Hamza Al Ghamdi stated in their martyrdom video about American occupation of Muslim countries.

Another reason for increase in suicide terrorism is the conviction among terrorists that suicide attacks are effective in achieving their objective. The notable examples are American and French military withdrawal from Lebanon in the 1980s and Israeli partial withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza in 1994 and 1995, after devastating suicide attacks there. Thus, Pape holds that suicide terrorism is mainly a strategic response to foreign occupation with important but limited coercive power. Foreign military occupation accounts for 98.5% - and the deployment of American combat forces for 92% -of all the 1,833 suicide terror attacks since 2004.

Interestingly, since the Israeli combat forces left Lebanon in 2000, there has not been a single Lebanese suicide attack – not even during Hez-

ollah's war with Israel in the summer of 2006.

In Iraq, if Islamic fundamentalism was driving suicide attacks there should have been at least as much suicide attacks from the 100 million Shias as against the approximately 50 million Sunnis who are associated with suicide attacks there. It is the Iraqi Sunnis who feel most threatened by American occupation.

The decline of suicide terrorism in Iraq from 2007 to 2008 is due to:

1. The geographic separation of population along the sectarian lines when 500,000 to 1 million residents moved from mixed Sunni Shia neighborhood to homogeneous ones.
2. The deployment of coalition troops in the city and a change in military strategy to population protection of a modest number of mixed neighborhoods.

The case of Anbar province in Iraq is very interesting. It saw a decline in violence though its population is overwhelmingly Sunni. It experienced no 'surge' of the coalition troops whose deployment remained constant (34,000-38,000) from September 2006 to September 2008. The reason for the decline in suicide attacks is attributable to the opposition of the local Sunnis to the insurgency – a shift due to willingness of the coalition to enlist the local tribal cooperation. Commonly called the 'the Arab Awakening'. The local tribal groups cooperating with coalition troops increased from 5000 in September 2006 to 100,000 strong in September 2008.

In Afghanistan, there was an increase in suicide attacks with 93 in 2006 to 36 in 2008 mainly directed against security targets related to American and allied forces. 90% were carried out by Afghan nationals. The increase is directly attributable to the growth and deployment of Western forces in Afghanistan.

In Pakistan, the rise in suicide terrorism was noticed in 2007. Prior to 2001, Pakistan experienced a single instance of suicide terrorism (1995). From 2002 Pakistan started witnessing suicide attacks especially after U.S. forces had acquired covert bases for its operations in Afghanistan. In early 2007, the number rose five times which were mainly against military targets. The key reason for this is the deployment of Pakistan army against the Taliban. From April 2004 to September 2006, Pakistan concluded a series of peace agreements with various Taliban leaders with the result there were fewer fighting between Pakistan and Taliban forces. Following U.S. pressure to change course, Pakistan army conducted a major air attack against a Madrasahs in October 2006 suspected of training Taliban militants, Taliban retaliated with suicide attack against a Pakistani army camp in November 2006. Taliban encouraged suicide attacks against the Pakistan government and the army by stressing that they were simply an extension of American military domination of the region.

Pape goes on to discuss suicide terrorism in other countries like Uzbekistan (where the U.S. established an airbase with 1,500 troops as part of its regional military operation to topple the Taliban and dislodge Al Qaeda from Afghanistan), Somalia (where suicide terrorism followed invasion of the country by Ethiopia) and Chechnya (where Russians were seen as occupiers).

Suicide terrorism is not transnational. Over 96 % of suicide terrorism from 1980 to 2009 occurred in campaigns that are tightly focused in specific areas of the world. The overwhelming number of attackers came directly from the population resisting a foreign occupation with the vast majority of attackers carrying out attacks in their home countries.

A British government study of the Muslim sympathizers of Al Qaeda's call for suicide attacks on the West found that it was related to Western occupation of Muslim countries. In April 2004,

British home office conducted a survey of the attitude of 1.6 million British Muslims and found that between 8 to 13% believed that more suicide attacks against the U.S. and the West were justified. They also revealed however that there are limits to multiple loyalties. The great majority of U.K. Muslims (up to 85%) regarded attacks on Western targets including 9/11 attacks as unjustified. Among those who endorsed suicide terrorism the survey identified the number one reason to be the invasion of Iraq.

An examination of the 7 July 2005 bombers, revealed that none of the four attackers were economically or socially alienated. Religious indoctrination is also not a valid explanation in their cases. They had a secular upbringing and none of them were educated in Islamic schools like traditional Islamic schools. It was socialization into a primary group that became progressively radicalized over time on the issue of Western military policies towards Muslim countries, a kindred communal attachment they all shared.

In summary, Pape says that occupation by foreign forces is the main cause of suicide terrorism. Suicide terrorism against the local forces happens when the latter is allied with foreign forces.

Overall, this book is a worthwhile read for all students of international terrorism.

Srinivas Gopal is currently a visiting professor at National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore occupying Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee Chair.



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A Graduate School of Nanyang Technological University

Nanyang Technological University
Block S4, Level B4, Nanyang Avenue,
Singapore 639798

Phone: +65 6316 8925

Fax: +65 6791 1941

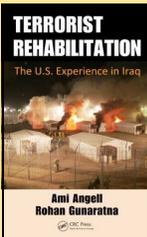
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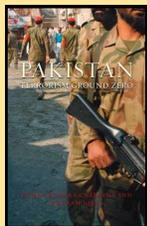
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Events and Publications



- Terrorist Rehabilitation: The US Experience in Iraq (CRC Press Taylor and Francis Group, 2011) by Dr. Ami Angell and Dr. Rohan Gunaratna

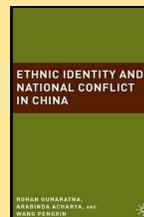


- Pakistan: Terrorism Ground Zero (Reaktion Books, 2011) by Dr. Rohan Gunaratna and Mr. Khurram Iqbal



- International Aviation and Terrorism: Evolving Threats, Evolving Security (Routledge 2009) by Dr. John Harrison

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- Ethnic Identity and National Conflict in China (Palgrave Macmillan 22 June 2010) by Dr. Rohan Gunaratna, Dr. Arabinda Acharya and Mr. Wang Pengxin



- Targeting Terrorist Financing: International Cooperation and New Regimes (Routledge 2009) by Dr. Arabinda Acharya