



Terrorism Monitor

In-Depth Analysis of the War on Terror

VOLUME VIII, ISSUE 36 ♦ SEPTEMBER 23, 2010

IN THIS ISSUE:

BRIEFS.....

SUICIDE-BOMB ASSASSINATION OF PROMINENT CLERIC IN SOUTH WAZIRISTAN
MAY INCITE TRIBAL CONFLICT
By Tayyab Ali Shah.....3

IRAQI OIL FACILITIES THREATENED AS ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ INTENSIFIES ITS
CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE STATE
By Murad Batal al-Shishani.....4

FRENCH COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATIONS IN THE SAHARA
By Jean-Luc Marret.....6



An oil field in Basra, Iraq

Terrorism Monitor is a publication of The Jamestown Foundation. The Terrorism Monitor is designed to be read by policy-makers and other specialists yet be accessible to the general public. The opinions expressed within are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of The Jamestown Foundation.

Unauthorized reproduction or redistribution of this or any Jamestown publication is strictly prohibited by law.

EGYPTIAN ISLAMIC GROUP IDEOLOGIST DR. NAJIH IBRAHIM SAYS TIME IS NOT RIGHT FOR ISLAMISTS TO SEIZE POWER

Dr. Najih Ibrahim, the principal theorist of Egypt’s al-Gama’a al-Islamiya (GI - Islamic Group), has outlined a new future for the GI, Egypt’s most notorious terrorist group in the 1990s and the domestic movement of many Egyptian extremists who went on to form the core leadership of al-Qaeda.

A founding member of the movement, Najih Ibrahim, was released from prison in 2006 in a mass release of 1200 GI members from Egyptian jails. His release followed a 2003 decision by the movement to renounce political violence and the initiation of the “Revisions project”, led by imprisoned GI leader Sayed Imam Abdulaziz al-Sharif (a.k.a. Dr. Fadl), once a close associate of al-Qaeda’s Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri. The Revisions project has now spread to other parts of the Arab world, as imprisoned Islamists reexamine their advocacy of political violence and terrorism. Najih Ibrahim discussed the implications of the recent death of Egyptian state security officer, Major General Ahmad Ra’fat al-Tayyib, the sponsor of the Revisions project. The GI ideologue insists that this event will have little impact on the Revisions, as General al-Tayyib’s individual approach to the project has now become state policy. The Revisions initiative is now “a deep-rooted ideology.”

Najih Ibrahim pointed to the recent release of the eldest son of former GI leader, Shaykh Omar Abd al-Rahman (imprisoned in the United States since 1996), as proof of the success of ongoing reconciliation efforts. Shaykh Omar’s



For comments or questions about our publications, please send an email to pubs@jamestown.org, or contact us at:

1111 16th St. NW, Suite #320
Washington, DC • 20036
Tel: (202) 483-8888
Fax: (202) 483-8337

Copyright ©2009

son, Muhammad, spent seven years in prison after his arrest in Afghanistan as part of the exiled group of GI hardliners that dominated al-Qaeda's leadership (*al-Masry al-Youm* [Cairo], September 5). Muhammad is married to the daughter of the late Shaykh Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, another Egyptian Islamist who acted as al-Qaeda's commander in Afghanistan until his death by U.S. missile strike earlier this year (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, June 2).

Referring to the aborted Koran burning in Florida and American perceptions of Islam in general, Najih Ibrahim maintains that Americans should learn about Islam "from its sources, and not from the Zionist media or from the behavior of al-Qaeda... The fact is that Bin Laden is not Islam; Islam is greater than Bin Laden, greater than all the Islamist movements, and greater than the behavior of all Muslims."

Instead of the direct pursuit of power, Najih Ibrahim advocates a policy of "participation, not replacement":

The Islamist movement started with the concept of replacement, namely that the Islamists replace the regime. No, let us abandon this concept, and support the concept of participation and cooperation in what is good. Let us leave for the state the sovereignty issues, and we handle Islamic call, education, and the development of society, its progress, educating its ethics and preserving its identity... Whoever the ruler might be, we will not clash with him. We will cooperate with him in what is good. What we can change in a kind way, and by good word, we will change, and what we cannot will be beyond our ability.

Najih Ibrahim says the GI believes Islamists should abandon the idea of seizing power, as the goal is unrealistic. "If they achieve power, they will be forced to relinquish it by the regional and international powers," Ibrahim said. He warns Islamists that they will be put under siege and subjected to negative portrayals in the media and economic blockades that will make payment of government salaries or alleviation of poverty impossible. Najih Ibrahim even considers participation in the People's Assembly elections undesirable, saying the funds used for election campaigns could be better used to support the 4,000 orphaned children of deceased GI members and the 12 GI members still under sentence of death in Egyptian prisons. He holds little hope for change at the executive level, saying presidential elections will be "only a formality" that will lead to the re-election of

President Hosni Mubarak or his son, Jamal Mubarak. "It will not be anyone other than one of these two," Ibrahim believes. Najih Ibrahim warns of the danger posed to the Islamist movement by secularists who are eager to push the Islamists into confrontation with the ruling power. After doing so, the secularists then turn "into the followers and entourage of the ruler; they climb over our skulls and wounds, they take control of media, culture and everything and leave us to go to prisons and detention camps as usual."

HIZB-I-ISLAMILEADERGULBUDDINHEKMATYAR CLAIMS CIVIL WAR THAT FOLLOVED RUSSIAN WITHDRAWAL WILL NOT BE REPEATED

Engineer Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of Afghanistan's Hizb-i-Islami and a former prime minister of the country, recently outlined his views on the future of the Afghan conflict, the jihad in Pakistan, the role of al-Qaeda, the legitimacy of suicide attacks and other issues (Geo News TV, September 15). [1]

The fate of Northern Alliance leader Ahmad Shah Masood at the hands of Algerian "journalists" in 2001 is never far from the minds of Afghan political leaders, so to protect Hekmatyar's security the interview with Pakistan's Geo News TV was carried out by sending Hekmatyar a videotape containing questions and receiving a videotape carrying replies in return.

Hekmatyar sees most parties to the current conflict in Afghanistan coming out weaker as a result of the war. Iran and Pakistan have become embroiled in their own difficulties, while even al-Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban are not in a position to aid the Afghan mujahideen as they did in the past. Afghanistan's own Northern Alliance has "disintegrated," while other proxy groups used by Russia and the United States have become "diluted". "The United States and its allies will have to face a similar fate after the evacuation from Afghanistan as the Soviet Union did. They will neither be able to do what they did after the 9/11 incident, nor what they did after Soviet Union's withdrawal [when] they created the Northern Alliance in collaboration with Russia, which blocked the establishment of an Islamic government by the mujahideen." Iran, however, is accused by Hekmatyar of cooperating with the United States while pretending to be its opponent. As a result, "Iran never had the level of influence in Afghanistan's internal affairs as it has now."

Surprisingly, Hekmatyar appealed to the Taliban of Pakistan to abandon their fight against the government of Asif Ali Zardari and devote their energies to driving out the foreign troops based in Afghanistan. Should the current situation change in Pakistan, the direction of its mujahideen could be refocused. “If the occupying forces attack Pakistan or any other Muslim country, it will become obligatory on all Muslims to support the Pakistani mujahideen. No doubt, the supporters of infidels [i.e. the Islamabad government] are also violating the teachings of Islam, but we need to differentiate between the bigger and smaller enemies and adopt different approaches in dealing with them.” Hekmatyar claims Afghan president Hamid Karzai does not have the authority to negotiate a withdrawal of U.S. and other foreign forces from Afghanistan. Instead, he offers a plan prepared by his party entitled Milli Meesaq (the National Charter), which he claims is supported by a majority of Afghan politicians.

The veteran Islamist warlord claims there is little chance of al-Qaeda re-establishing itself in Afghanistan, though he says their presence has been exaggerated to justify the aggression of the Western nations. “There are no al-Qaeda centers or warriors in Afghanistan anymore. The Western countries themselves have accepted that the number of al-Qaeda warriors in Afghanistan is less than 100. Is it possible that 150,000 troops equipped with modern weapons have been fighting for nine years to kill 100 warriors?”

Nevertheless, Hekmatyar advocates tactics closely associated with al-Qaeda, including attacking religious scholars who oppose suicide attacks as “pro-government opportunists.” Other than those who carry out strikes against mosques, those who give their lives in suicide attacks will be “well rewarded by God.” When asked if responsibility for 9/11 lay with al-Qaeda, the Jews or the Americans, Hekmatyar said he believed al-Qaeda was responsible, “because the Jews cannot prepare such committed people who can sacrifice their lives in suicide attacks.”

Note:

1. Engineer is used as a professional title in Central Asia along the same lines as “Doctor.”

Suicide-Bomb Assassination of Prominent Cleric in South Waziristan May Incite Tribal Conflict

By Tayyab Ali Shah

While the Pakistani government and army were busy helping millions of Pakistanis reeling under the worst floods in the nation’s history, newspaper headlines flashed on August 24 with news of a suicide attack on a South Waziristan mosque that killed 30 worshippers. Among the dead in the Wana mosque was Mullah (or Maulana) Noor Muhammad, a former member of parliament, author, teacher, cleric and an influential leader of the Ahmadzai Wazir tribe (*The News* [Islamabad], August 24; *Daily Jinnah* [Islamabad], August 25). The tribe was shocked by his death and announced a three day mourning period (*Daily Times* [Lahore], August 25).

Eighty-year old Mullah Noor Muhammad first came to prominence in the 1970s when he used his newly built mosque and madrassa (religious seminary) to consolidate his power over the Wazir tribe and lead them in an armed conflict against the Pakistani government. This led to casualties on both sides, the demolition of 400 shops in Wana (an important source of income for the Mullah and his followers), and three years in jail for Noor Muhammad. In retrospect, it could easily be considered a harbinger of things to come some 30 years later when Taliban commanders used religion to swell their ranks and consolidate their movements against the Pakistani state. [1]

Mullah Noor Muhammad was elected as a member of parliament in 1997 and remained MP for two years until General Pervez Musharraf overthrew the elected government of Nawaz Sharif and dissolved parliament. After that he started focusing on his madrassa, delivering powerful lectures every Friday and every day during Ramadan. He subscribed to the Deobandi school of thought and was a member of the pro-Taliban Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam, currently part of Pakistan’s governing coalition. He was considered a moderate mullah as he had, unlike other Deobandi clerics, encouraged girls’ education and ran a private girls school in Wana Bazaar. He was also openly opposed to suicide bombing and other tactics of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

However, many Taliban had attended his madrassa as students or had attended his informal lectures/sermons. Therefore, most of them respected him and would listen to him (*The News*, September 5). He also mediated deals between the Taliban and the government on many occasions. Mullah Noor Muhammad was the teacher of former Ahmadzai tribesman and veteran Taliban commander Nek Muhammad (killed by a U.S. Predator UAV missile in June, 2004) and played a key role in brokering a peace deal between the government and Nek Muhammad in April 2004 (*The News*, September 5). His death could therefore have a highly negative impact on the prospects of any deal between the Taliban and the government. Noor Muhammad was considered among the few notables of South Waziristan who had the ability to unite all nine sub-tribes of Ahmadzai Wazir. His death could thus have consequences for unity among the Ahmadzai as well.

To date, responsibility for the Wana mosque attack has gone unclaimed. However, the severed head of the suicide bomber (which survived the attack unscathed) is believed by locals to be that of an Uzbek militant (*The News*, September 5). Given the role of Mullah Noor Muhammad in expelling Uzbeks from the area when he extended whole hearted support to Maulvi Nazir in fighting against the Uzbeks and their subsequent expulsion from the Wana and Shakai areas some two years ago, an Uzbek role in this attack cannot be ruled out (*Terrorism Monitor*, January 11, 2008). It is also said that Maulana Noor received threats from undisclosed enemies and had raised his security level by hiring armed guards. However, many other Wazir are looking at the Mullah's murder as the Mahsud tribe's revenge for the death of another former MP and Mahsud cleric, Maulana Mirajuddin, who was assassinated last May. Others consider it a murder by hard-line Taliban in response to Mullah Noor Muhammad's moderate and pro-government stance (*Aaj Kal* [Lahore], August 25).

There were reports that following this suicide attack top militant commander Maulvi Nazir warned supporters of TTP chief Hakimullah Mahsud to either leave the Wana district of South Waziristan within 48 hours or face "stern action" (Press Trust of India, August 29). Maulvi Nazir's group (known as the Commander Nazir Group - CNG) suspect Hakimullah's supporters were behind the suicide bombing. Other reports indicate that the ultimatum came not from Maulvi Nazir but from Halimullah, one of the four senior commanders of the

CNG. Most of the Mahsuds in the Wana region reside in an area controlled by Hakimullah, a Tojikhel Wazir (*Dawn* [Karachi], August 29).

According to a local chief, this was the first ever suicide attack against non-combatant tribesmen in South Waziristan and may herald a new phase of militancy in the area (*The News*, September 5). Mullah Noor Muhammad's assassination sends a strong message to those who oppose the presence of foreign or non-local Taliban in the area. This is important, as there have been reports of a growing number of Punjabi and foreign Taliban in the area. The murder also has the potential of igniting a civil war between Wazirs and Mahsuds, as Wazir tribesmen are enraged over this killing. As a first step the Mahsuds have been asked to evacuate the area and it is possible more violent means may be taken to avenge Noor Muhammad's death (Geo TV, August 28).

Tayyab Ali Shah is a free lance political and policy analyst. He is a Pashtun from Pakistan and has Masters degrees in Political Science, Business Administration and Public Policy.

Note:

1. See Akbar S. Ahmad, *Resistance and Control in Pakistan*, Revised ed., London, 2004.

Iraqi Oil Facilities Threatened as Islamic State of Iraq Intensifies its Campaign Against the State

By Murad Batal al-Shishani

As the United States ends the combat phase of its occupation of Iraq and begins an "advisory phase" known as Operation New Dawn, there are fears that a resurgent Islamic State of Iraq (ISI – closely tied to al-Qaeda in Iraq) may target Iraq's oil infrastructure as part of its campaign against the disunited Baghdad government.

Ali al-Maliki, president of the Security Committee of the Basra Governorate Council, said on September 1 that intelligence reports indicate al-Qaeda in Iraq has a plan to target oil facilities in order to undermine Iraq's infrastructure after the completion of the partial U.S. withdrawal from Iraq:

We have received information indicating that there is a plan to target a number of oil facilities. The security agencies in the governorate are dealing with this information with extreme interest and a new security plan has been laid down to properly protect these facilities (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, September 1).

This statement comes at a time when Iraq's political scene is undergoing three major developments: the official end of the American combat mission in Iraq, a political crisis arising from the failure to form a new government after the elections and the significant rise in ISI/al-Qaeda attacks in recent months (albawaba.com, August 26).

The remarkable resurgence of the ISI through various attacks targeting government buildings, military bases, members of the Sahwa councils and crowded markets came as a surprise to most al-Qaeda observers, many of whom expected the death of al-Qaeda military leader Abu Hamza al-Muhajir and ISI leader Abu Omar al-Baghdadi last April would result in diminished organizational capabilities. Another factor contributing to the expected decline in capacity was the success of the Sahwa (Awakening) councils in rounding up tribal Sunni Arabs to combat ISI/al-Qaeda in Iraq since 2007.

In order to "improve its political position," the ISI released a political document in January entitled, "A Strategic Plan to Improve the Political Position of the Islamic State of Iraq" that admitted "failure" in some aspects of its effort to take control of Iraq (Hanein.info, February 20; see also *Terrorism Monitor*, April 23). The organization used the document to call for a campaign against the Sahwa councils, the enhancement of the ISI as a political symbol in Iraq and the use of the slogan "One bullet to the occupier and nine to the apostates."

Surprisingly, instead of committing small-scale, irregular and unorganized attacks, ISI/al-Qaeda has shown in its latest attacks that it is capable of mounting far more complex operations than expected. Al-Qaeda aims to turn Iraq into a launching pad for waging jihad in neighboring countries as part of its stated effort to

"liberate Palestine." In a recording on the situation in Gaza, al-Qaeda deputy leader Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri called on jihadists in Gaza to coordinate with jihadists in Iraq (As-Sahab Media Production, July 19; see also *Terrorism Monitor*, July 29). Recent postings on jihadi websites have shown an increasing interest in the activities of ISI.

In the context of the partial withdrawal of U.S. troops, the continuing political impasse in Baghdad and increasing concerns surrounding Iranian influence on Arab Sunnis, it is expected that al-Qaeda will link its activities in Iraq with its global objectives. In other words, if al-Qaeda targeted oil facilities in Iraq (as predicted by Ali al-Maliki) it would deepen the crisis of the state on one hand by increasing social tensions and frustration by affecting oil-related energy supplies such as electricity, gas and fuel, while on the other hand affecting the international dimension of Iraq's oil industry (e.g. oil prices, foreign investment in Iraq, etc).

The southern region of Iraq, which produces about 90% of the country's oil and hosts a large number of oil fields in Basra and Amarah, would potentially be a primary target for ISI/al-Qaeda. In addition to these facilities, the pipelines connected to Iraqi ports, warehouses and refineries are also potential targets for Islamist militants. According to a recent post on a jihadist website written by a contributor calling himself "Abu Abdullah al-Batar," attacks could include infrastructure belonging to oil companies such as BP, Total and others, "which are investing in developing the oilfields of southern and northern Rumaila, Majnoon and Halfaya." Al-Batar urged ISI to target oil facilities in Iraq in order to "break the backbone of the Iraqi rafidah ["rejectionist," i.e. Shi'a] government...because oil revenues are the lifeblood of this government, the source of livelihood, the main source of weapons deals purchased by this government and the source of salaries for its staff, army and police." Al-Batar included photos and maps of the oilfield installations in southern Iraq in the same post (shamikh1.net/vb, September 16).

In the shadow of Iraq's persistent political crisis and the wake of the transfer of security responsibilities from U.S. forces to a possibly unprepared Iraqi military, targeting oil facilities seems to be a strategic alternative for the Salafi-Jihadis to enable the continuation of their war against the United States and the West while punishing the national government. At the same time this could, by increasing frustration among Iraqis, help ISI/al-Qaeda regain its lost host locations inside Iraq.

Murad Batal al-Shishani is an Islamic groups and terrorism issues analyst based in London. He is a specialist on Islamic Movements in Chechnya and in the Middle East.

French Counterterrorism Operations in the Sahara

By Jean-Luc Marret

On the morning of July 22 at approximately 5 A.M., Special Forces of the Mauritanian and French armies commenced operations against an alleged al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) base in northern Mali designed to free French hostage Michel Germaneau, 78-year old dependent on medicinal drugs. To this day, ambiguity surrounding the operation and the role of French counterterrorism forces in Africa remains.

Reports seemed to indicate that Germaneau was either dying or may have already been dead at the time of the operation. [1] However, French intelligence agencies never appeared to have any concrete or corroborating proof of this. Though six AQIM members were killed in the joint operation, it ultimately failed to release Germaneau, who AQIM later claimed to have murdered as “revenge for our six brothers” (al-Jazeera, July 26). Paris may have decided to join the Mauritanian operation as a precautionary and opportunistic measure, even if it meant only small-scale involvement. Open sources reveal that the French did not wish to get directly involved in a large attack by the Mauritanian army. Meanwhile, the Mauritanian Groupe Special d’Intervention (GSI - the largely French-trained Mauritanian Special Forces) wanted to prevent the consolidation of AQIM’s small and well-dispersed mobile groups. In early July, Mauritania determined that an AQIM group was on the verge of attacking a military garrison on its territory sometime at the end of the month (*Jeune Afrique*, August 23). Mauritanian president Mohamed Ould Abd al-Aziz warned Paris that he would commence operations to deter this threat. However, sources critical of France and Algeria claim

that the rescue operation was actually a smoke screen for a broader, more covert multinational operation involving Algerian and French forces. According to these sources, a simultaneous but politically sensitive Franco-Algerian assault on AQIM positions in the Tessalit region of Mali’s Tigharghar Mountains was the real operation (*Le Républicain* [Bamako], July 26; al-Jazeera, August 8). [2]

A meeting dedicated to planning the liberation of the French hostage took place in Paris on the evening of July 13. The Mauritanian president was received briefly at the Elysée, just before the traditional Bastille Day military parade. The Mauritanians, possibly helped by the French, had spotted an AQIM “camp” in the Mali desert, about 150 km from the border between the two countries. The modest and rather rudimentary camp served as a supply base for Abdulaman Yahia’s *katiba*, which is dependent upon on a larger AQIM formation led by Commander Abu Zeid. [3]

This attack can be considered a step forward in France’s counterterrorism policy in the Sahel. This is, by far, the most visible French action in recent times. Yet that does not mean that France will launch itself into an overt “war against terror” in the area. On the contrary, the whole idea is to act in ways that will prevent the crystallizing of a new land of jihad, such as Iraq, Afghanistan or Yemen.

The French approach can be analyzed using a circle theory:

- The broader circle concerns France’s territory and Europe: To prove its international credentials, AQIM regularly tries to infiltrate the Algerian Diaspora to recruit operational militants or establish logistical support. [4] Until now, the French security services, especially the Direction Centrale du Renseignement Intérieur (DCRI - Central Directorate of Interior Intelligence), have been successful in preventing an AQIM terrorist attack on French soil. Nevertheless, recent events in the Sahel have raised the possibility of such an attack, as the DCRI director himself recently claimed (*Le Monde*, September 11).
- The second circle is concerned with the Maghreb: Traditionally, France has strong operational cooperation with the states of the region - probably much closer than with any European or American allies. This cooperation includes intensive intelligence exchanges.

- The third and last circle covers the African sub-Saharan states: For decades much of this area was colonized by the French. Hence, France not only has detailed knowledge of the area gained over the long-term, but has also shaped the area in many ways (language, security, economy etc.). When it comes to cultural intelligence, for instance, or knowledge of local practices, norms and values, France certainly has a strong measure of expertise. In fact, many papers and research done during colonial times - though they might suffer from a partially biased colonialist approach - can still be used as historical background information. [5] Experience, here, is of the essence.

Hi-Tech and Low-Tech

Having said that, counterterrorism, in practice, can be very basic, and at the same time, high-tech as well. The Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure (DGSE - France's external intelligence agency) acts in traditional fashion by collecting human intelligence (HUMINT), which consists mostly of paid or unpaid informants in local tribes, among traditional authorities or in French expatriate communities. It also discretely patrols sensitive areas to check AQIM movements. [6]

The recent defense White Paper recommended the enhancement of signals intelligence/satellite capacity. [7] French involvement in the launch of the MUSIS and CERES surveillance satellites shows how the Sahara remains a strategic priority for France. [8] This dual approach provides an operational capacity that is well-shaped for Africa. Thus, in just two weeks, the DGSE was able to track down the al-Qaeda murderers of four French tourists through Mauritania and Senegal, finally leading to their arrest in Guinée-Bissau (*Libération*, January 12, 2008; see also *Terrorism Monitor* Briefs January 9, 2008; June 12, 2010). [9] Special units are used as a complementary field-tool. In the Germaneau case, Service Action, the DGSE armed branch, is reputed to have intervened jointly with the Mauritians. However, other Special Forces derived from the French army also have a counterterrorism capacity and could have been involved. They are incorporated in the Commandement des Opérations Spéciales (COS):

- The Thirteenth Régiment de Dragons Parachutistes (13e RDP or 13th Parachute Dragoon Regiment) specializes in Africa and can intervene far behind enemy lines to provide

intelligence on the adversary. It can also assess the nature, size and capacity of the adversary in targeting operations. [10]

- The First Régiment Parachutiste d'Infanterie de Marine (1er RPIMA or 1st Naval Infantry Paratrooper Regiment), created during the Second World War on the SAS model, has operational know-how in assaults, hostage rescue, infiltration and exfiltration. [11]

- The Détachement ALAT [Aviation Légère de l'Armée de Terre] Opérations Spéciales (DAOS), consisting of two special operations helicopter squadrons.

French assets are ready to assist in local operations, with the most recent example being the response to the kidnapping of seven mine-workers (five of whom were French) from the French Areva uranium operations near the Niger town of Arlit on September 17. Eighty French military personnel were sent to Niger to assist in the search for the hostages using a long-range Breguet Atlantique surveillance aircraft and a Mirage F-1 jet fitted with specialized monitoring equipment (AFP, September 17; September 20).

Military and Police Cooperation

Like the United States, France began training African military forces in the 1960s to enhance their counterterrorism skills. The aforementioned Mauritanian GSI was trained by the French military within the framework of a bilateral assistance agreement. [12] Such cooperation occurs regularly. These interactions can have political consequences and can be hazardous for the personnel involved. For instance, in July 2009, two French security advisers posing as journalists were kidnapped from their hotel in Mogadishu, Somalia by gunmen of Hizb al-Islam (AFP, July 16, 2009; July 19, 2009; see also *Terrorism Monitor* Brief, July 30, 2009). The hostages were later divided between Hizb al-Islam and al-Shabaab, with one of the men escaping on August 26, 2009 (Shabelle Media Network, July 16, 2009; AFP, July 16, 2009).

Counterterrorism cooperation and assistance are also responsibilities of the police. The Service de Coopération Technique Internationale de police (SCTIP - International Technical Cooperation Service of Police) was created in Africa in 1961 to provide assistance to the newly independent African states. While its action

was originally restricted only to training, it now covers operations including narco-trafficking, organized crime and counterterrorism. It now appears that the DCRI might be much more involved with its African counterparts than was earlier estimated.

Conclusion

France's counterterrorism operations in the Sahara are based on long-standing regional co-operation, intelligence exchanges, police and military training programs, the use of Special Forces and autonomous high-tech capacities. If the use of force was, and still is, the traditional choice, that does not mean that the option of negotiation is totally neglected. President Sarkozy has claimed to be a negotiator in many famous hostage-taking situations (*Nouvel Observateur*, May 24). This approach has its advantages – in the best case scenario the hostages can be freed without revealing the actual circumstances involved in their release. The downside is that attempting to ransom the hostages may violate the policies of France's African security partners. Ransoms also provide funding for terrorism. Clearly, it is pragmatism that must prevail in such sensitive matters under the Sarkozy presidency.

Jean-Luc Marret is a senior fellow at Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (Paris) and at the Center for Transatlantic Relations, SAIS-Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C.

Notes:

1. <http://secretdefense.blogs.liberation.fr/defense/2010/07/AQIM-annonce-avoir-ex%C3%A9cut%C3%A9-lotage-fran%C3%A7ais.html>.
2. Menas Associates, July 23, 2010; http://www.menas.co.uk/news/article/758/BREAKING_NEWS_French_and_Algerian_forces_in_failed_attack_on_AQIM/.
3. A *katiba* was the basic military unit of the Armée de Libération Nationale, the armed wing of the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale during the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962). A *katiba* is equivalent to a light company which can consist of up to 100 men.
4. J.L. Marret, "Homeward bound – AQIM fails to strike Western Europe," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, May 11, 2010.
5. See, for instance, the research papers published by the French army – CDEF (Centre doctrinal d'emploi des forces): <http://www.cdef.terre.defense.gouv.fr/default.htm>.
6. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jz7BwDavMcQ> ; http://www.wat.tv/video/dgse-service-action-117y2_2hfr9_.html.
7. http://www.livreblancdefenseetsecurite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/livre_blanc_tome1_partie1.pdf .
8. http://www.cnes-multimedia.fr/cnes_fr/cnesmag/cnesmag7_FR_dossier.pdf ; http://213.139.102.176/dicod/breves/musis_projet_militaire_europeen_de_satellite_d_observation_de_la_terre ; <http://www.senat.fr/rap/a08-102-5/a08-102-59.html>.
9. http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x516i4_des-agents-francais-ratent-une-chas_news ; http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x52du1_des-agents-francais-ratent-une-chas_news .
10. <http://le.cos.free.fr/cos.htm>; http://www.wat.tv/video/13-rdp-soldats-ombre-1278i_2hfr9_.html.
11. http://www.rpima1.terre.defense.gouv.fr/votre_espace/english/index.html.
12. <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/8/dossiers/870777.asp>.