

# Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis

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INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH  
S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
A Graduate School of Nanyang Technological University

## May 2013: Cooperation

Today, both terrorism and the responses employed against it are essentially collective action issues to the extent that acts of terrorism or counterterrorism operations in one country have both positive and negative implications for people or property in another country. For example, decisions involving measures to counter terrorism are interdependent; one country's counter-measures are highly dependent on those of other countries. Gunaratna and Haynal show how these measures can only be effective if made in concert with others or at least if there is a high degree of congruence among the countries and agencies involved. Their article highlights how intelligence cooperation between the US and Canada prevented the VIA Rail plot's success, whereas underlying suspicion between the US and Russia resulted in the successful execution of the bombing at the finish line of the Boston Marathon.

Similarly, by networking, terrorists have rendered national frontiers irrelevant. Terrorists move and cooperate across national borders for planning, preparation, training and sanctuary, often involving nationals of different countries. In this issue, the case of Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) in Syria is used to highlight some of the complexities arising out of the networking between terrorist groups. Khan and Mitzcavitch look at how JN is breaking away from the traditional mold of an Al Qaeda franchise and how competition over recruitment is undermining the independence between franchises.

Networking among terrorists limits the effectiveness of counter-terrorism initiatives, especially when countries do not act in coordination. Countering terrorism effectively thus requires a multilateral and multifaceted approach and cooperation between the states irrespective of political and ideological differences. Basit illustrates this by examining

counterterrorism cooperation between the US and Pakistan, arguing that dichotomy at multiple levels in the relationship has undermined the effectiveness that cooperation is normally expected to have.

Finally, the imperative for cooperation emerges from the need to build synergies to harmonize national, regional and international efforts and regimes. It also stems from the enormous economic, military and humanitarian cost of managing conflicts in the first place. No single country can underwrite these costs alone. In Afghanistan, the imperative for cooperation is also being created by changing circumstances. As the US moves out, the need to prevent a vacuum has seen Russia emerge among other regional players. Tereshchenko looks at Russia's traditionally inward focus for fighting terrorism, and lessons for a more positive counterterrorism engagement internationally.

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## Counterterrorism Intelligence Collaboration: Lessons from the Boston Bombing and VIA Rail Plot

Rohan Gunaratna and Cleo Haynal

*The Boston bombing and VIA Rail Plot which occurred within a week of each other in April 2013 highlight the continued need for intelligence collaboration between countries to meet the threat of transnational terrorism.*

North America recently witnessed two events – one, an intelligence failure and the other, an intelligence success. On 15 April 2013, the Boston bombing showed that despite all the measures taken over the last decade, the United States is still not safe from terrorism. However, seven days later on 22 April 2013, a plan to attack a VIA Rail passenger train on the busy route between Toronto and New York City was uncovered and stopped. Both events show that the transnational terrorism threat must be met by close and efficient international collaboration and intelligence sharing.

At the first glance, this seems an easy assessment to make. In the case of the Boston bombings, the FBI did not follow up on the intelligence lead from Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB). For the foiled VIA Rail terrorist

plot, Canada and the US collaborated and stopped the attack. Of course, it is not that simple. By definition, intelligence agencies are built to protect national interests and are suspicious of all foreign information (some more than others). However, with an understanding of the intelligence cycle and the culture fostered by the different intelligence agencies, a closer look at the two recent attacks demonstrates why successful international collaboration is needed to create an adequate counterterrorism regime to fight the present transnational threat.

### The High Stakes of the Intelligence Cycle

Sound and timely intelligence is instrumental in preventing a planned attack. However, preventing an attack is more difficult – legally and operationally – than apprehending perpetrators



Two IEDs exploded near the finish line of the annual Boston Marathon on 15 April 2013.

Photo source:  
<http://www.chinasmack.com/2013/stories/boston-marathon-bombings-chinese-netizen-reactions.html>

after the act. However, apprehension after the fact is one step too late. The damage is done and punishment of terrorists does little to deter future attacks. The real and more important challenge is prevention through the intelligence cycle. This involves gathering and sorting information to make it useable, and giving it to the right people at the right time.

The digital age has brought new scales of information and also new operational ways of sifting through data, but the problems of collating it remain similar. A phenomenon called “big data” has emerged, with the unprecedented amounts of information that need to be sorted and made sense of in giant databases. Intelligence agencies gather new information across different mediums every day and store it in multiple databases. The US Government’s Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) is the central repository on suspected terrorist identities, but is only one of many databases used to identify international threats.

The combined effort of computer algorithms and human minds scan data every day to find patterns and ultimately stop terrorist attacks. Tamerlan Tsarnaev, the older of the two brothers responsible for the Boston bombing was flagged and in the TIDE database. However, the Tsarnaevs had also triggered the attention of the FSB, putting them in a much smaller subset of individuals who are of international interest. This is something that should raise a red flag.

One of the simplest ways to understand the basis for most computer algorithms that measure the influence or importance of the information is that each element of information is taken as an individual node. Its importance is then weighed with respect to other information linked to it and the relative weight of that secondary information factors in to the weight of the first. There are other factors that most of these algorithms take into account, such as the authority of the source. Information from non-redundant, authoritative

sources is important in creating a full picture. The human failure which contributed to the Boston bombing was to dismiss the Russian information and not factor it in the threat assessment of the two brothers. This could have signaled an authoritative source linking to similar information, but the poor working relationship of the Russian and US intelligence agencies led this intelligence to drown in a sea of information.

### **The Evolution of Liaison Services**

Because of the nature of their work, intelligence agencies are built to protect their intelligence rather than to share it – they are experts at keeping secrets. Even within the same country, a lack of collaboration has created major intelligence failures.

During World War II, the rivalry between the United Kingdom’s MI-5 and MI-6 caused delays and resulted in critical intelligence gaps. The same happened and still happens between the CIA and FBI. The failure of US intelligence agencies in sharing intelligence between them contributed significantly to the 9/11 attacks. Subsequently, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was created to remedy intelligence gaps. The DHS brings 22 agencies together and its mission is to facilitate liaison services between sister agencies and improve collaboration.

When domestic agencies struggle to put aside internal competition, it is hard to imagine that intelligence agencies from different sovereign countries would have an easier time collaborating. On 16 April 2013, a US soldier was caught trying to sell classified information to Russia. He was apprehended and sentenced to 16 years in prison. This exemplifies the antagonistic rivalries that always will exist in intelligence gathering. But while international suspicion may be unavoidable, states need to unite against the common threat of transnational non-state terrorist groups.

### **The Boston Bombings: Collaboration Failure**

Tamerlan Tsarnaev is the older of the two brothers who committed the bombing at the finish line of the Boston Marathon. In 2011, he made a trip to Dagestan, a restive region of Russia. This, along with concerns about some of the individuals he was associating with in the US and Russia, raised suspicion from the Russian side, which warned the US about him twice.

The FBI logged him in the TIDE database and interviewed him, but found nothing worth following up on. The extent of Tamerlan's ties with an Armenian extremist known as Misha is only being uncovered now. Today, US intelligence attributes its inability to follow up on the several hundred US residents flagged in the TIDE database to a lack of resources.

Nonetheless, the intelligence from Russia was not given high priority. It is evident that American and Russian interests do not always align, but in this case, the warning did not appear to have an easily assessable ulterior motive. What could Russia gain from the US increasing surveillance on a US resident's movement on its own soil? Indeed it gained nothing, and the US had much to lose.

### **The VIA Rail Plot: Collaboration Success**

Americans may enjoy poking fun of their neighbor to the north, but the US nevertheless considers Canada to be part of the same Anglo-Saxon North American family. Collaboration between the two countries came more easily and managed to prevent an attack that could have had a significant impact.

International collaboration was vital in this case, but the key intelligence derived from the Canadians' community engagement efforts. This case therefore highlighted one of the broader factors that feed into obtaining credible and timely intelligence. Members of the Muslim

community to which the two suspects belonged notified the Canadian authorities of the suspects' radical behavior. While Misha's growing influence on Tamerlan went unreported, a Canadian imam notified the authorities of Raed Jaser's extremist behavior. The collaboration between the Muslim community and between the US and Canadian intelligence services was instrumental in stopping the attack.

### **Transnational Solution for a Transnational Threat**

Terrorism knows no borders and has taken on an increasingly amorphous transnational character. Governments should mirror this behavior to get a real sense and an accurate picture of what they are up against. Government agencies should both look at the community level and at the international level. They must learn to accept international collaboration against common threats. Naturally, allied countries will share information more easily, but on a case-by-case basis, every government should assess information given by a foreign government and factor it into their threat analysis.

Some experts in international security have criticized the centralization of intelligence and contrasted it to the network structure of the adversary. Therefore, it is important to point out that international and intra-national cooperation does not mean centralization. It means a fluid structure that allows for both community engagement and sharing of information. The nation-state that defined the 20th century is no longer the entity in the fight against terrorism, and it is time to step out of the mold.

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*Rohan Gunaratna is Head, ICPVTR and Professor of Security Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.*

*Cleo Haynal is an Analyst with ICPVTR.*



## How Terrorists Cooperate: Perspectives on Jabhat al-Nusra's Links with Al Qaeda

*While cooperation can occur between non-state actors like terrorist groups, there is no clear-cut set of norms guiding their behavior. In such a situation, cooperation produces different results than expected and the relationship between the cooperating actors can take on an unexpected form. The case of Jabhat al-Nusra has provided fresh perspective on the relations between Al Qaeda and its franchises. Furthermore, it demonstrates how local issues significantly impact the relationship that a franchise has with Al Qaeda. Lastly, it also shows how competition over recruitment has undermined the independence of Al Qaeda franchises.*

### Setting its eyes on the “Far Enemy”? Jabhat al-Nusra as a Microcosm of the Global Jihadist Movement

Veryan Khan

Over the past year, there has been much speculation about the origins and motivations of the foreign fighters in Syria. To be certain, Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) has the largest number of recruits both domestic and foreign. Known to be the most ruthless group operating in Syria, JN is proving to be a most influential presence not only within Syria's borders, but beyond them as well. Transnational ties through foreign recruits combined with a growing external presence indicate that JN is a microcosm of the larger jihadist movement.

The first major wave of foreign fighters to Syria came from neighboring countries in the Middle East, but as sympathy for the rebellion expanded, it attracted fighters from many other parts of the world. Some estimates claim that as many as 5,000 individuals have travelled to Syria to help topple the Assad regime. The growing numbers of Western recruits are alarming policymakers in countries like the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. A recent report from the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization estimates that out of the total number of foreign fighters in Syria, Europeans make up between 7 and 11 percent. It must be noted that while not all those who travelled to

fight in Syria joined jihadist groups, a large proportion have joined JN and the smaller groups affiliated with it.

Active calls for individuals to fight in Syria from Al Qaeda Central's leader Ayman al-Zawahiri began in July 2011. Al-Zawahiri gave the “jihad” in Syria his full backing – in February 2012, he stated that “every Muslim and every free and honest person in Turkey, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon should rise and help their brothers in Syria with everything they have and can do.” Since al-Zawahiri's original appeal, at least one high-ranking



Fighters from Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria.

Photo credit: AFP  
<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/25/245822.html>

representative of Al Qaeda's Shura Council in Pakistan has journeyed to Syria to manage the coordination of future operations. Al Qaeda Central thus remains active in working towards achieving a global Islamic Caliphate.

JN's association with Al Qaeda, where it has become a franchise while in a position of strength, is however quite a rare occurrence. Other franchises such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) only took up status as a franchise after their numbers dwindled. Thus, the allegiance to Al Qaeda at this point in time by JN appears to further validate the strength of the Al Qaeda "brand".



Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp in southern Lebanon, March 2013.

Photo credit: Mahmoud Zayyat , AFP  
<http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/15226>

Reports from Lebanon also point to JN's growing transnational influence within the largest refugee camp in Lebanon, Ain al-Hilweh. Located at Sidon in the south of Lebanon with more than 70,000 inhabitants, it is nicknamed the "zone of unlaw." Given that Lebanese Armed Forces are not permitted to enter the camp, it is an ideal location for JN to thrive. It is believed that a small wing of JN has been developing there since the beginning of 2013. Using Palestinians from the rebel-controlled Yarmouk camp in Damascus, JN infiltrated Ain al-Hilweh and smuggled in both weapons and other supplies, in addition to incorporating a leadership body. It is reported

that much of Ain al-Hilweh's infrastructure is being operated by this smaller wing, including security for the camp. This Lebanese wing of JN made up of Palestinians is also apparently working collectively with other groups based in Ain al-Hilweh such as Fatah al-Islam and Jund al-Sham. If the coalition between JN, Fatah al-Islam, and Jun al-Sham congeals, then an essential inroad for al-Zawahiri's global caliphate would be made.



Abou Zeid (L), leader of the Al Qaeda franchise based in Algeria, was killed in March 2013.

Photo credit: Al-Andalus via AFP-Getty Images  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/20/AR2010102005252.html>

There also appears to be some tension developing between the Al Qaeda franchises over both local and overseas recruitment. AQIM's strength appears to have been particularly affected as a result of fighting the French in Mali which also led to the death of its leader, Abou Zeid. Official literature from AQIM's media arm, Al Andalus Media Productions, stated that "those willing to immigrate to serve God should instead join the jihadist ranks in the Islamic Maghreb." Additionally, Abu Hazifa al-Gharib, an assistant of an AQIM leader, said in an official statement that the groups moving jihadists from North Africa into Syria were part of "a French conspiracy" to keep jihadists away from the front in the Islamic Maghreb. Thus the success of the JN's

recruitment campaign is seen in the eyes of AQIM leadership as a threat to their own efforts in the border area between Mali, Niger, Algeria and Mauritania. This recruitment tug-of-war is significant because it is uncommon for one branch of Al Qaeda to speak out publicly against another. Furthermore, the AQIM statements violate Al Qaeda's principle on the independence of their branches.

Given AQIM's statements about JN combined with the support from Al Qaeda in Iraq, it appears that the recruitment by JN is propelling Al Qaeda

forward and backward simultaneously. On the one hand, a success in Syria would give Al Qaeda the leverage it has lost from the death of Osama bin Laden. On the other hand, success in Syria may mean defeat in Mali – or at least AQIM would believe that was so. If infighting between two well-established Al Qaeda franchises ensues, it could very well contribute to the defeat of the whole organization.

*Veryan Khan is Editorial Director and Associate Publisher, Beacham Publishing's Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium.*

## **Contradiction amidst Confirmation: Jabhat al-Nusra's "Merger" with the Islamic State of Iraq**

Andrew Mitzcavitch

On 6 April 2013, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of Al Qaeda, released an audio message on militant websites. In it, he urged Islamist fighters in Syria to unite in their efforts to oust President Bashar al-Assad's regime and establish an Islamic emirate. His statement was followed by an audio message on 8 April 2013 from the Islamic State of Iraq, a branch of Al Qaeda that was formed in October 2004. The leader of the Islamic State of Iraq, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, announced his group's merger with Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) into a new entity called "The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant". This announcement, however, was quickly contested by Abu Mohammed al-Joulani, the head of JN. Referring to the merger, al-Joulani stated that "we were not consulted" and that the group had only heard about it through the media. He also said that JN would continue to operate under its current name while renewing the group's allegiance to the leader of Al Qaeda.

These developments have two important implications. Firstly, they confirm without doubt that JN is an Al Qaeda affiliate linked to its branch in Iraq. Secondly, they also provide an

indication of the state of cooperation between JN, the Islamic State of Iraq and Al Qaeda and how these groups perceive each other.

The link between the Islamic State of Iraq and JN was suspected from the time when the latter first emerged in a video posted online in January 2012. Since then, JN has become one of the most prominent groups involved in the Syrian conflict and the US correctly designated it as a terrorist organization in December 2012 for being an "alias" of Al Qaeda in Iraq. The message from al-Joulani therefore confirmed what was previously presumed about the link between the two groups. Al-Joulani and other members of JN had fought alongside the Islamic State of Iraq before returning to Syria to establish the group after the revolt started in 2011. Al-Baghdadi helped with the development of JN's policies and plans, along with assigning fighters and personnel. Both groups have the same ideology, and share finances, military training compounds, logistics, intelligence and weapons. Their use of suicide attacks and car bombs has distinguished them from other insurgent factions in Iraq and Syria. However, JN has insisted that it only





Jabhat al-Nusra fighters, 2012.

Photo credit: AFP

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/12/11/254534.html>

targets the military or the regime's apparatus – even though civilians have been part of the casualties – whereas the Islamic State of Iraq targets mostly Shiites and government officials.

The strongest indication of cross-border cooperation between JN and the Islamic State of Iraq was during an attack carried out in early March 2013. A group of Syrian soldiers had crossed the border into Iraq seeking refuge following clashes with rebels over the weekend of 2-3 March. Iraqi authorities were escorting the soldiers back to Syria when they were ambushed in Akashat, a town close to the border in Iraqi territory. At least 42 Syrian soldiers were killed along with seven Iraqi soldiers. The attack was well-coordinated, involving roadside IEDs and rocket-propelled grenades. A senior Iraqi military intelligence official said the attackers appeared to have been tipped off about the soldiers' movements.

Despite the evidence of close linkages, complexities in the relationship between JN and the Islamic State of Iraq can be seen in the way

JN responded to the Islamic State of Iraq's announcement of a merger. JN has been credited with playing a major role in the rebels' gains against Assad's regime and its fighters have demonstrated their prowess on the battlefield. The group has also tried to provide basic services in the parts of northern Syria under rebel control, including security and food to civilians struggling to survive. The recent announcement by the Islamic State of Iraq may have undermined these efforts to some extent and increased resentment, which in turn will affect the insurgency on some level. This is because Al Qaeda continues to be condemned in the eyes of many Syrians.

Furthermore, not much was known about JN when the group first appeared on the scene and al-Joulani might have wanted it that way so Syrians would not view his organization with the same disdain they view the Islamic State of Iraq. Another possible reason why he distanced his group from the merger could be that he recognized the potential it had of backfiring. Being linked to a non-Syrian group that has strict

Islamic beliefs would marginalize the group from other fighting factions and from the civilian population. Another possible reason for al-Joulani's response could be that he feels JN is on equal footing in its relationship with the Islamic State of Iraq and resented the suggestion of being subordinate. It is not yet clear what response al-Baghdadi will have to al-Joulani's stance or where al-Zawahiri stands.

Al-Joulani's message also tried to reassure the people of Syria that JN would "remain faithful to the image [they] have come to know, and that [its] allegiance [to Al Qaeda] will not affect [its] politics in any way." The Free Syria Army (FSA) has said that it does not support the ideology of JN, but has cooperated with it in certain operations on the ground because JN is well-equipped and financed. Only non-lethal aid has been provided to the rebels by the US and EU. Furthermore, FSA spokesman Louay Meqdad told Agence France Presse that "There has never been and there will never be a decision at the command level to coordinate with JN."

It is clear that the rebels in Syria have a dilemma with the jihadi fighters. The old adage that "my enemy's enemy is my friend" may have to be the approach until the Assad regime is deposed. Once the rebels' immediate goal is taken care of, they can then take of the radical elements with international cooperation and support. The announcement by the Islamic State of Iraq is also likely complicate efforts to send arms to the rebels from abroad, and may hamper efforts to lift the EU arms embargo on Syria. Furthermore, it will cause concern among backers of the rebels who are enemies of Al Qaeda, and bolster the Syrian government's assertions that the regime is fighting terrorists who want to impose an Islamic state. Regardless, the fight for Syria still continues and it is still uncertain what the outcome will be.

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*Andrew Mitcavitch is an Analyst with ICPVTR.*

## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

*Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis* is 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.

Articles can be 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 issue. Please refer to the [guidelines](#).

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## GLOBAL PATHFINDER

Global Pathfinder is a one-stop repository for information on current and emerging terrorist threats focusing on terrorism and political violence in the Asia-Pacific region.

It is an integrated database containing comprehensive profiles of terrorist groups, key terrorist personalities, terrorist and counter-terrorist incidents as well as on 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 Elena Ho Wei Ling at the following email address: [isewlho@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:isewlho@ntu.edu.sg)

## Cooperation between Pakistan and the US: Dichotomy at Multiple Levels

Abdul Basit

*Given a lack of clarity with respect to common approaches to be taken and the existence of divergent strategic interests, cooperation between the US and Pakistan to fight terrorism has not achieved desired outcomes.*

Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the US and the subsequent American invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, Pakistan emerged as a key US partner in the fight against transnational terrorism. Pakistan allowed the US to use its bases, shared key intelligence and also assisted the US in arresting Al Qaeda leaders and operatives inside Pakistan. In addition, Pakistan deployed more than 120,000 troops and created around 90 military checkpoints along its border with Afghanistan to stem the movement of the Al Qaeda-Taliban combine. It was the first time in its history that Pakistan deployed troops in the semi-autonomous Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

In economic terms, Pakistan has incurred losses of more than \$70 billion in the fight against transnational terrorism. Due to its counterterrorism cooperation with the US, Pakistan has faced a deadly wave of Taliban-led terrorism that has swept across the country leaving more than 42,000 people, including 5,000 army troops, dead. Despite these sacrifices, Pakistan's cooperation in the fight against terrorism has always been looked at with doubt and suspicion. Pakistan has regularly been squarely blamed for playing double games, not doing enough and has been pressured on several occasions to "do more."

### Dichotomy at Multiple Levels

Cooperating with the US in the fight against the Taliban has resulted in a dichotomy at multiple levels for Pakistan – both locally and globally.

Locally, the majority of people in Pakistan believe that successive military and civilian governments have fought the Americans' war in FATA at the cost of Pakistan's own internal security, economic growth and social and human development. For them, Pakistan did not need to involve itself in the war. Globally, Pakistan's image has also been tainted as a peace spoiler in the region. Regional countries and the international community believe that Pakistan has furthered its own agenda and interests in Afghanistan and has undermined international coalition forces' efforts to end the Taliban insurgency. These multiple levels of dichotomy have placed Pakistan in a unique dilemma. It can neither disassociate itself from the fight against transnational terrorism nor can it continue in a hostile local environment.

### A Hasty Alliance with the US

In 2001, Pakistan's headlong rush to join hands with the US followed a dire warning from the Bush administration that Pakistan could be with the US or would be against it. The marriage of inconvenience between the US and Pakistan resulting from the unconditional capitulation to US demands laid the foundation for an ephemeral and contradictory alliance which was bound to collide in the long run.

The alliance with the US, however, was a blessing in disguise for the then military ruler General (Ret.) Pervez Musharraf. It not only provided his military rule legitimacy and longevity, but also brought in much-needed financial



General (Ret.) Pervez Musharraf (L) with George W. Bush (R), September 2006.

Photo credit:  
 Roger L. Wollenberg, UPI  
[http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/World-News/2010/11/23/Musharraf-to-be-asked-about-Bhutto-killing/UPI-93001290527383/](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2010/11/23/Musharraf-to-be-asked-about-Bhutto-killing/UPI-93001290527383/)

assistance to bankroll a collapsing economy. Musharraf successfully used cooperation against terrorism as a bargaining chip to win more concessions and economic assistance from the West.

### **Tactical Convergence and Strategic Divergence**

At the tactical level, the interest of the two countries converged. For the US, Al Qaeda was the primary target. For Pakistan, arresting leaders and operatives of Al Qaeda not only brought in huge sums of reward money, but also won applause and the trust of the US. In the initial years, Pakistan was the so-called “frontline state” in the fight against terror and a key non-NATO US ally.

However, due to the varying strategic outlooks of the US and Pakistan, there was a fundamental disconnect between the priorities of the two countries in the fight against terrorism. This brought the two countries into a protracted war of words. For the US, a fight against terror meant a uniform counterterrorism policy for all kinds of terrorist groups with a zero-tolerance approach. However, for Pakistan, fighting terrorism only meant dismantling and disrupting those terrorist groups which undermined Pakistan’s internal

security. Fighting every terrorist group existing on its soil was neither a priority nor feasible for Pakistan. This distinction, which led to phenomena such as “Good Taliban versus Bad Taliban,” created suspicion and misgivings between the two countries.

At strategic level, another clash of interests between the US and Pakistan was over how to approach the endgame in Afghanistan. The US believed the key to victory in Afghanistan was a military operation against the Haqqani network and destruction of its sanctuaries in North Waziristan. On the contrary, Pakistan advocated a reconciliatory approach through political settlement. Pakistan’s reluctance to dismantle the sanctuaries of the Haqqani network and its advocacy for a peace deal with the Afghan Taliban has been seen as a bid to ensure a place for the Taliban in the future Afghan power structure.

### **Violation of Sovereignty**

Due its mistrust of Pakistan, the US relied on a controversial pilotless drone campaign to destroy the Haqqani network’s sanctuaries and eliminate the Al Qaeda leadership in FATA. The increasing use of drone strikes by the US, which Pakistanis consider a violation of the country’s territorial



sovereignty, has proved to be counterproductive. Though drones are an effective counterterrorism tool at the tactical level, they have produced more terrorists than they have killed. The Pakistani government's dubious policy to publicly condemn and privately condone drone strikes has spawned anti-US sentiment. This has made it difficult for the government to convince its citizens that the cooperation with the US is in the country's best interests.

At the same time, the arrest and subsequent release of the American CIA contractor Raymond Davies from Lahore in early 2011 also cast doubt over the covert activities of the CIA in Pakistan. After the Raymond Davies episode, the Pakistan Army attempted to minimize the footprint of the CIA in Pakistan, asking more than 200 US trainers to leave the country. The subsequent US operation in Abbotabad which killed Al Qaeda founder Osama Bin Laden in May 2011 further undermined counterterrorism cooperation between the two countries. Two NATO air raids which killed around 24 Pakistani soldiers near the Mohmand tribal region on 26 November 2011 effectively brought cooperation to a complete

halt. Pakistan responded to this attack by suspending land route supplies to NATO troops stationed in Afghanistan, boycotting the December 2011 Bonn Conference and temporarily disassociating itself from the Afghan peace process.

Given Pakistan's pivotal position in the US-led fight against transnational terrorism and the high stakes for the US in the campaign in Afghanistan, counterterrorism cooperation between the troubled allies is difficult to avoid. In the absence of collaborative counterterrorism frameworks, the two countries have ended up working at cross purposes despite pursuing the same goals. A more nuanced and consensual approach that will take Pakistan's sensitivities and limitations into account can ensure better results. For instance, joint border patrolling can be very helpful in minimizing cross-border militant movement, while intelligence sharing and prior information about drone strikes can minimize mutual mistrust.

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*Abdul Basit is a Senior Analyst with ICPVTR's Pakistan desk.*



A demonstration against drone strikes in Peshawar, April 2013.

Photo credit: Mohammad Sajjad, AP

<http://www.npr.org/2011/09/06/140216985/an-open-secret-drone-warfare-in-pakistan>

## Beyond the North Caucasus: Lessons for Russia's Counterterrorism Policies and Practices

Natalia Tereshchenko

*Russia's counterterrorism efforts have traditionally been inward-looking, focusing on the threat emanating from the North Caucasus region. However, Russia is beginning to show interest in playing a greater role towards mitigating the terrorist threat in South Asia.*

The primary terrorist threat to Russia has tended to emanate from the former Soviet republics in the North Caucasus. Militant groups from Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ingushetia have routinely conducted suicide bombings and other terrorist activities in the southern region and across Russia. These groups and their networks, which often do not have a name, have been responsible for many high-profile attacks. Recent attacks include the bombing of Moscow's Domodedovo Airport in January 2011, the suicide bombings on the Moscow Metro in March 2010 and the 2004 hostage crisis in Beslan.

To address this threat more effectively, new counterterrorism legislation was introduced in 2006 and in the same year the National Anti-Terrorism Committee (NATC) of Russia was established, consolidating all operational and preventive activities by the government. The general approach against the *boeviki*, or militants, has tended to concentrate on their neutralization via a strategy of targeted kill-and-capture operations. This has been seen in the deployment of special units such as Directorate "A" of the FSB Special Purpose Center, commonly known as *Spetsgruppya "A"*.

There is, however, a less well-known side to Russian operations in the Caucasus. Media, community and local government engagement, de-radicalization and religious dialogue have all been initiated to prevent potential terrorist threats. In February 2013, about 60 young militants who have not committed serious crimes renounced terrorist activities and attended

de-radicalization programs in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria located in the North Caucasus. An interesting approach has also been seen in the Republic of Ingushetia, which borders Chechnya. In October 2012, President Yunus-bek Yevkurov shared his mobile telephone number and posted a supportive note in his blog aimed at militants who wished to return to a normal life, promising them his utmost cooperation.

The formalization of a preventive approach to militancy in the south of Russia and the Republics occurred in March 2011 with the adoption of a work plan titled *The Prophylaxis of Terrorism and Extremism in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, 2011-2015*. The work plan included measures to counter the spread of terrorist ideology and also to promote tolerance and moderation. An example is a summer camp for children and youth aimed at fostering inter-cultural dialogue and harmonization of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations. Similar initiatives have also been implemented in Stavropol, where a bombing in 2010 highlighted an emerging threat in an area that has been relatively free of violence compared to its neighbors.

With preventive activities only initiated quite recently, there is certainly room for their development. High levels of militarization in Ingushetia, political instability and increasing crime in Dagestan, and the continuous terrorist activities emanating from Chechnya all indicate the need to address the source of extremism –

radical ideology. In this regard, the NATC's head has welcomed the work of special commissions in the North Caucasus that have carried out de-radicalization and reintegration programs for former extremists. An example is the Dagestan Commission for Adaptation which was set up in November 2010. The Commission has, however, achieved mixed results. In just over two years of operation, it has received only a small number of cases, but out of those individuals it has rehabilitated, there have been no incidents of recidivism yet.

Russia's vast experience in traditional, "hard" counterterrorism and its recent foray into "soft" approaches focused on prevention make it well-placed to offer advice and assistance to other countries that face an extant terrorist threat. While Russia has yet to make a sustained contribution beyond its own borders, there are indicators that this is poised to change, and circumstances emerging that will necessitate a change.

Until 2010, Russia had a minimal role in the US-led war in Afghanistan. This has been partly due to its experience with the Afghan mujahideen in the 1980s, the ups and downs of its relationship with the US, and its own interest

in preventing a backlash in the Central Asian republics that border Afghanistan. However, Russia has seen heroin abuse and drug-related crime worsen in recent years, and believes the problem should be handled at the source. Afghanistan produces most of the world's heroin and significant quantities make their way north via the Central Asian republics to Russia. To combat drug trafficking, Russia has engaged in joint operations with coalition troops in Afghanistan since October 2010. In March 2013, an operation in eastern Afghanistan resulted in the seizure of around 20 tons of heroin.

As a result of the cooperation to stem the trafficking of heroin, Russia began to relax its stance towards involvement in Afghanistan. Since late 2010, it has sold military hardware to Afghanistan – including Mi-17 helicopters – and has been involved in training the Afghan National Army. Furthermore, economic cooperation between the two countries has also grown extensively. Russia has been involved in major infrastructure projects, including the construction of housing and hydroelectric dams. In 2012, the first meeting of the two countries' Joint Economic Commission was held in Moscow. Keen interest was expressed by Russian firms to invest in Afghanistan's energy, industries and transport



A hearing of the Dagestan Commission for Adaptation.

Photo source:  
<http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/22354/>





The National Security Advisers of China, Russia and India met in February 2013 to discuss the security situation in Afghanistan.

Photo source:  
<http://nz.chineseembassy.org/eng/zqyw/t1016206.htm>

sectors. Russia is also making investments to upgrade Soviet-era education institutions and provide more scholarships for Afghan students to study in Russia.

With the impending US drawdown in 2014, concerns have emerged in Russia over deteriorating security in Afghanistan leading to a resurgence in drug trafficking and Islamist terrorist activity. To mitigate this, Russia is positioning itself to contribute significantly to Afghanistan's security post-2014. In April 2013, Russia announced its intention to set up maintenance facilities in the country for weapons of Soviet and Russian origin. However, Russia has also been clear in its intention to avoid a military presence and has maintained that the primary thrust of its strategy in promoting Afghanistan's security and stability is economic in nature.

It appears likely that Russia may contribute on issues related to security through a multilateral framework with other regional actors such as China and India. The three countries already have established linkages via groupings such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In February 2013, the National Security Advisers of Russia, India and China met in Moscow to discuss the security

situation in Afghanistan. Pakistan has also been included in the several rounds of dialogue that have been swiftly initiated by the various actors in the region.

At present Moscow's counterterrorism cooperation appears low key. If Russia is to make a significant contribution, it must cover ground that other countries have already been making. China, in particular, has been proactive in terms of organizing various forms of counterterrorism exercises not only through the SCO, but also through bilateral and multilateral arrangements with a number of countries. As it develops a clearer picture of its emerging role in the region, Russia must remain flexible and attuned to areas of mutual benefit to ensure the success of its involvement. It is well-poised to use its involvement in Afghanistan as a springboard to contribute positively to security and stability in South Asia and beyond.

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*Natalia Tereshchenko is a Project Manager and Researcher with the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, and a Researcher at Wikistrat.*



# INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH



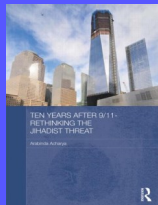
**S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**  
A Graduate School of Nanyang Technological University  
Block S4, Level B4, Nanyang Avenue, Singapore 639798  
Phone: +65 6316 8925 Fax: +65 6791 1941  
Website: [www.pvtr.org](http://www.pvtr.org)

The International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) is a specialist center within the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

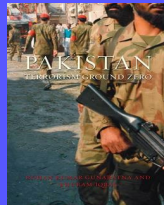
ICPVTR conducts research, training, and outreach programs aimed at reducing the threat of politically motivated violence and at mitigating its effects on the international system. The Center seeks to integrate academic theory with practical knowledge, which is essential for a complete and comprehensive understanding of threats from politically-motivated groups.

The Center is staffed by academic specialists, religious scholars, as well as personnel from the law enforcement, military and intelligence agencies, among others. ICPVTR is culturally and linguistically diverse, comprising of functional and regional analysts as well as Muslim religious scholars from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America.

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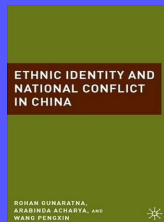
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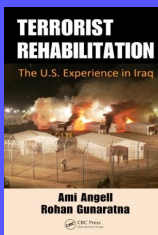
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