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# Release of the Country Reports on Terrorism 2007

By

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[Below are excerpts from a press conference held to release the “Country Reports on Terrorism, 2007.” The beginning of the statement is Ambassador Dailey. The “Methodology and Numbers” section is Russ Travers. A complete transcript is available at: <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rm/2008/104233.htm>.]

Besides meeting Congressional requirements, the 2007 edition of the Country Reports on Terrorism aims to inform, to stimulate constructive debate, and to enhance our collective understanding of the international terrorist threat. The Country Reports should serve as a reference tool to inform policymakers, the American public, and our international partners about our efforts, progress, and challenges in the war on terror.

The 2007 Report begins with a strategic overview to illustrate trends. We note some positives. First, working with allies and partners across the world, we created a less permissive operating environment for terrorists, kept leaders on the move or in hiding, and degraded their ability to plan and mount attacks. Dozens of countries have passed new legislation or strengthened preexisting laws that provide law enforcement and judicial authorities with new tools to bring terrorists to justice.

We saw several 2007 plots disrupted in Europe that could have resulted in serious loss of life. In June, terrorists attempted attacks in London; and a day later, terrorists drove a burning car into the Glasgow Airport. A total of 70 individuals, including two suspected perpetrators in Glasgow, were arrested in connection with these attacks. In Germany, a major terrorist plot was disrupted in September with the arrest of two ethnic Germans and a Turkish citizen resident. The plotters, who German officials said were connected to the Islamic Jihad Group, had acquired large amounts of hydrogen peroxide for possible use in multiple car attacks.

Also in September, Danish police arrested eight alleged militant Islamists in Copenhagen with al-Qaida links on suspicion of their preparing explosives for use in a terrorist attack. In Southeast Asia, there have been no new major Jemaah Islamiya attacks in the region in over a year. In January 2007, we confirmed that the Abu Sayyaf Group’s nominal leader, Khadaffy Janjalani, was killed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, as was the Abu Sayyaf Group’s spokesperson, Abu Solaiman.

Indonesian police broke up the Jemaah Islamiya cells in Sulawesi and in Central Java. The Iraqi Government, in coordination with coalition forces, made significant progress in combating al-Qaida in Iraq, AQI, and affiliated terrorist organizations. The Baghdad Security Plan, initiated in February with assistance from local citizens, has succeeded in reducing violence to late 2005 levels. It has disrupted and diminished AQI infrastructure and driven some surviving AQI fighters from Baghdad and the Al Anbar province into northern Iraqi provinces. While AQI remained a threat, there was a noticeable reduction in the number of security incidents throughout much of Iraq, including the decrease in civilian casualties, enemy attacks, and improvised explosive device attacks in the last quarter of the year.

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In Colombia, the Uribe administration worked to defeat and demobilize Colombia's terrorist groups through its powerful democratic security policy which combines military, intelligence and police operations, efforts to demobilize combatants, and the provision of public services in rural areas. While the FARC [Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia] continued to operate and control territory mostly in the more remote areas of the country, its capabilities have been reduced.

Mauritania's successful transition to a democratic governance in 2007 represented a significant victory for counterterrorism efforts in West Africa and an important victory against efforts to weaken governance and impose radical ideology on a traditionally moderate population. Mauritania took strong stands in the face of multiple attacks from al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, called AQIM, in 2007 working with regional partners to apprehend terrorists and improving its capacity to defeat terrorists and efforts to use its territory to launch attacks and establish terrorist safe havens.

Challenges remain, however. Despite the efforts of both Afghan and Pakistani security forces, instability coupled with [the] Islamabad-brokered ceasefire agreement in effect for the first half of 2007 along the Pakistani border provide al-Qaida [AQ] leadership with the ability to conduct training and operational planning, particularly that targeting Western Europe and U.S. Numerous senior AQ operatives were captured or killed, but AQ leaders continued to plot attacks and cultivate stronger operational connections that radiate outward from Pakistan to affiliates throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe.

### **Al-Qaida**

Core elements of al-Qaida are adaptable and resilient, and al-Qaida and its associated networks remain [the] greatest terrorist threat to the United States and its partners. By making use of local cells, terrorists have been able to sidestep many of our border and transportation security measures. During the reporting period, terrorist attacks around the world, which include incidents in Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Yemen, resulted in more than 3,200 noncombatant deaths, 6,000 injured, and 300 kidnapped. The importance of these numbers is that they were mostly Muslims.

AQ's increase in its propaganda efforts seeking to "inspire" support in Muslim populations undermine[s] Western confidence and create[s] a perception of a worldwide movement more powerful than it actually is. Terrorists consider information operations a principal part of their effort. Use of the internet for propaganda, recruiting, fundraising, and, increasingly, for training, has made the internet a "virtual safe haven."

2007 was marked with the affiliation of regional insurgent groups with al-Qaida. We note, in particular, the growing threat in North Africa posed by al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, AQIM, which was known as a Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, GSPC, prior to its September '06 merger with al-Qaida. [In] April '07, AQIM launched suicide attacks for the first time and vowed to use them as a primary tactic against their enemies. The near-simultaneous December 11 bombings of the Algerian Constitutional Council and the UN [United Nations] headquarters in Algiers underline a substantial shift in strategy. The attack on UN headquarters underline[s] that AQIM now considers foreign interests to be attractive targets.

We note AQIM's consistently changing profile through 2007. For example, the August 8 suicide bomber was a 15-year-old boy, the youngest suicide bomber in the history of Algeria, while a suicide bomber who struck the UN headquarters on December 11th was a 64-year-old man in the advanced stages of cancer, potentially the oldest.

Counter-radicalization is a key policy priority for the United States, particularly in Europe, given the potential for Europe-based violent extremism to threaten our European partners and the United

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States. The leaders of al-Qaida and its affiliates are extremely interested in recruiting terrorists from and deploying terrorists to Europe, people familiar with our Western cultures that can travel freely.

AQ exploits the frustration of many Muslims around the world whose grievances are often legitimate. Terrorists seek to convert alienated or aggrieved populations by stages to increasingly radicalize and provide the extremist viewpoints, turning them into sympathizers, supporters, and ultimately, in some cases, members of terrorist networks. In some regions, this includes efforts by AQ and other terrorists to exploit insurgency and communal conflict as radicalization and recruitment tools to their benefit and using the internet to convey their message.

Countering radicalization demands that we treat immigrant and youth populations not as a source of threat to be defended against but as a target of enemy subversion to be protected and supported. It requires community leaders to take responsibility for actions of members within their communities and to counteract extremist propaganda and subversion. The terrorist message of hate and death holds no promise for anyone's future.

### **State Sponsors of Terrorism**

The report features a chapter on state sponsors of terrorism, which include Iran, Syria, Sudan, Cuba, and North Korea. What causes the greatest concern about state sponsorship is a state sponsor that directs WMD [Weapons of Mass Destruction] resources to the terrorists or one that enables resources to be clandestinely diverted. This may pose a potentially grave WMD terrorist threat.

It will come as no surprise to hear that Iran remained the most significant state sponsor of terrorism. Iran provides aid to Palestinian terrorist groups, Lebanese Hezbollah, Iraq-based militants, and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. Despite its pledge to support the stabilization of Iraq, Iranian authorities continue to provide lethal support, including weapons, training, funding, and guidance, to some Iraqi militant groups that target coalition and Iraqi security forces and Iraqi civilians. In this way, Iranian government forces have been responsible for attacks on coalition forces.

Since 2006, Iran has arranged a number of shipments of small arms and associated ammunition, rocket-propelled grenades, mortar rounds, 107-millimeter rockets, and plastic explosives, possibly including man-portable air defense systems, MANPADs, to the Taliban.

Syria, another state sponsor of terrorism, both directly and in coordination with Iran and Hezbollah, continued to undermine the elected Government of Lebanon and remained a serious security threat. Foreign terrorists continue to transit Syria en route to and from Iraq. Despite acknowledged reductions in foreign fighter flow, the scope of the problem remained large. According to the December Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq Report to Congress, nearly 90 percent of all foreign terrorists known to be in Iraq have used Syria as an entry point. The Syrian Government could do more to stop known terror networks and foreign fighter facilitations from operating within its borders.

### **Terrorist Safe Havens and the Concept, Regional Strategic Initiative**

The report also includes a discussion of terrorist safe havens. We consider the terrorist safe haven to be ungoverned, under-governed, or ill-governed areas of a country and non-physical areas where terrorists that constitute a threat to the U.S. national security interest are able to organize, plan, raise funds, communicate, recruit, train, and operate in relative security because of inadequate governance capacity, political will, or both. This varies slightly from the intelligence community use of the term because we include the consideration of political will in capacity of host countries.

Remote areas of the Sahel and Maghreb regions in Africa serve as terrorist safe havens because of little government control in sparsely populated regions. Portions of the Federally Administered Tribal

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Areas, FATA, in the northwest province area of Pakistan have become a safe haven for al-Qaida terrorists, Afghan insurgents, and other extremists. Southeast Asia includes a safe haven composed of the Sulawesi Sea and Sula Archipelago, which sit astride the maritime boundary between Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. A number of al-Qaida operatives remain in East Africa, particularly Somalia, where they pose a serious threat to the United States and allied interests in the region. Although these elements have been somewhat disrupted as a result of Ethiopian and Somalian Transitional Federal Government military actions, they continue to operate in Somalia and elsewhere in East Africa.

Since 2006, we've been working on the Regional Strategic Initiative, or RSI, in an effort to develop flexible regional networks. We work with our ambassadors and interagency representatives in key transit areas of operation to identify the threat and to devise collaborative strategies, action plans, and policy recommendations. The RSI teams use all tools of statecraft in this effort.

Our toolkit to counter terrorism includes the Antiterrorism Assistance Program which provides partner nations and countries with training, equipment, and technology needed to increase their capabilities to find and arrest terrorists, the designation of terrorist organizations, and individuals in an effort to block terrorist funding, and also counterterrorist finance training [sic]. A key component of our efforts to address the conditions that terrorists exploit for recruitment and ideological purposes are the USG assistance programs administered through USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development], the Middle East Partnership Initiative, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and other U.S. entities which increase access to education, improve health care, and focus on democratic and economic reform. All these tools and more are explained, in detail, in Chapter 5.

### **Regional Overviews and Country Reports**

You'll find in the report, as in past years, regional overviews and reports on the terrorist situation in individual countries. We note progress and lack of progress where appropriate. Examples include: Afghanistan remained threatened by Taliban and other insurgent groups and criminal gangs, some of whom are linked to al-Qaida and terrorist sponsorship outside the country. Taliban insurgents murdered local leaders and attacked Pakistani government outposts in the FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Areas]. Nonetheless, the government of Afghanistan continued to strengthen its national institutions; and polls indicated the majority of Afghans believe that they are better off now than they were under the Taliban.

The government of Saudi Arabia confronted terrorism and extremist ideologies with varying degrees of success. The country suffered two high-profile terrorist incidents: the shooting of four French citizens and the violent murder of a high-ranking Saudi colonel. Saudi officials acknowledge that the long-term solution must include an effective campaign to de-legitimize the extremist ideology that underpins support of the terrorism. The government continued its extensive prisoner rehabilitation program aimed at undermining detainees' adherence to extremist ideology. More than a thousand Saudis have completed this program. The U.S. Government is following the progress of the program closely to both understand it and to monitor rates of recidivism.

In Lebanon, a campaign of domestic political violence continued. Most notable were the June 13, September 19, and September 12 car bombing assassinations of Walid Eido, Antoine Ghanem, and General Francois al-Haj, respectively.

In May 2007, Venezuela was recertified as not fully cooperating with U.S. antiterrorism efforts under Section 40a of the Arms Export and Control Act.

Despite U.S. pressure, Yemen continued to implement a surrender program with lenient requirements for terrorists it concluded it could not apprehend using traditional law enforcement means. The Yemeni

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justice system was also less effective. The courts did not set dates for trials of suspects involved in the two September '06 al-Qaida-orchestrated attacks on oil facilities in eastern Yemen. Finally, they released, pending their appeals, several subjects wanted by the United States for acts of terrorism.

Let me summarize, first of all, that we will not prevail against terrorism without embracing a holistic approach such as that employed by the Regional Strategic Initiative. Over time, our global and regional cooperative efforts will reduce terrorists' capacity to harm us and our partners, while local security and development assistance will build up partners' capacity. If we are to be successful, we must work together with our growing networks of partners towards our common goal in a strategic and coordinated manner to overwhelmingly defeat this terrorist compelling challenge.

### **Methodology and Numbers**

One of the responsibilities of the National Counterterrorism Center is to compile and maintain a database of terrorist incidents. We then draw from that database and support the Country Reports. And what I'm going to do is give you a very high-level overview.

I would encourage you to take a look at the NCTC.gov website. It provides the methodology we use. It actually has all of the incidents, the 14,000 or so that are out there, as well as charts and graphs and background material in an effort to be as transparent as possible.

A quick word about methodology—several years ago, we shifted away from the methodology you see on the left-hand side for international terrorism. Our judgment was that that was simply too narrow. You can see an underlying phrase there that talks about the requirement for individuals from two or more countries to be involved. That led to excluding events that, in our view, were clearly terrorism. And so we shifted about three and a half years ago to using that much broader statutory definition of terrorism. Three components: It has to be premeditated, politically motivated, [and] directed against noncombatants. That is an incredibly broad definition.

The upshot has been that we've moved from counting several hundred incidents each year to well in excess of 10,000. And we have used that for the last three years, and that allows for year-to-year comparability.

Here you see the global aggregates for 2005, '6 and '7. If you look from 2006 to 2007, we are essentially flat in terms of the number of incidents. Fatalities are up; total victims—fatalities, injuries, and hostages—are actually down. Really, the important point of the two bullets [is] down at the bottom. There is no question that tracking trends, cataloging this data, can be invaluable for a whole host of issues associated with the analysis of terrorism; but that second point is critical. In an aggregate count, we're talking about different groups with different agendas; and as a result, our view, I think academics' view, is that the aggregate totals are simply not a particularly useful metric for measuring success in the war on terror. You really have to disaggregate, so that's what we'll do now is we'll peel it back a little bit.

Here you see a region-by-region breakout. I guess three points that you should take away from here. First, terrorism is a tactic. It's used by different groups all over the world. Second point, the vast majority of attacks in 2007, as has been the case in previous years, are found in the Near East and South Asia. Essentially, 80 percent of the global attacks were in Near East and South Asia last year.

At a global level, as I mentioned, the incidents are essentially unchanged. You do see a growth, lower left-hand corner, in Africa. That was almost entirely in Somalia. And you do see a growth in East Asia. That was almost entirely as a result of the insurgency in Thailand. You do see slight declines in all the other regions of the world.

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Disaggregated a little bit further, and look—focus specifically on Iraq. As in previous years, roughly half of the global attacks, roughly 60 percent of the total fatalities, occurred in Iraq. The upper left-hand chart gives you total attacks and total fatalities over the last three years. You may recall from last year that there was a substantial jump from '05 to '06; '06 to '07 [was] relatively constant. But here again, aggregate numbers don't really tell the story. You have to look at that graph in the lower right-hand side; and what you see is a precipitous decline in attacks and fatalities over the course of the year, so sort of a quarter-by-quarter analysis.

And here's the rest of the world with Iraq numbers backed out of the equation, and what you see is kind of mixed picture. On the good news front, as Ambassador Dailey indicated, there's been a substantial decline in FARC attacks in Colombia, roughly 50 percent over the course of the year. In the Middle East, we saw very few attacks in Saudi Arabia, in Jordan, [and] in Egypt. I believe we cataloged one event in Saudi Arabia for all of last year. And there were also declines in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

On the less favorable side, we saw approximately a 50 percent increase in Thailand; and we saw a 100 percent increase in Pakistan. There were also more attacks in both Afghanistan and Somalia. And as you can see, in Africa, there was a growth in lethality of attacks. I would highlight Algeria in particular, in which after the merger, attacks actually declined; however, the number of fatalities increased substantially as a result of the AQIM. On net, [there was] a growth in attacks and fatalities in the rest of the world.

And the last briefing board, just a word about the attacks and the toll associated with them—I mentioned increased lethality. Algeria was one case. Pakistan is another. As I said, the number of attacks in Pakistan basically doubled; the number of fatalities essentially quadrupled, primarily in [the] northwestern parts.

Part of that has to do with that upper left-hand graph. Suicide attacks around the world were up about 50 percent from '06 to '07. And we also see, in the lower right-hand side, a growth in the number of attacks in which more than ten or more people were killed. That was also up.

A word about the human toll—beyond the gross numbers, as in previous years, police officers were hit particularly hard. Last year, almost 9,400 police officers were injured or killed. We also saw a growth in the number of attacks in schools, and many of them against girls' schools by Islamic extremists: 300 attacks, killing or wounding 180 teachers and almost 800 students. We also have reporting indicating upwards of 2,400 children were killed. The number is undoubtedly far higher, but that's what we can document.

You got recent al-Qaida leadership statements that they don't kill or attack civilians. We drew only on al-Qaida-affiliated claimed attacks, and we find that those attacks killed or wounded something like 5,400 civilians at markets, at funeral processions, and so forth. That number also is much higher, but these are only attacks that al-Qaida-affiliated groups claimed responsibility for.

And more generally, Muslims were hit particularly hard. As in previous years, well over 50 percent of the global people killed and wounded were Muslim. And again, mosques [were] also hit hard. Something like a hundred mosques were attacked last year.

That's a very high-level overview. As I said, all of the supporting data is out there on our NCTC.gov website.