



ASIA TIMES
www.atimes.com



Early detection can save lives.
ActNowEndBreastCancer.org


[WRITE for ATol](#)
[ADVERTISE](#)
[MEDIA KIT](#)
[GET ATol BY EMAIL](#)
[ABOUT ATol](#)
[CONTACT US](#)

Read us in Chinese at

亞洲時報

Search: [Archive](#) [ASIA TIMES](#) by keyword

go

Front Page

Greater China

China Business

South Asia

Southeast Asia

Japan

Korea

Middle East

Central Asia

World Economy

Asian Economy

IT World

Book Reviews

Letters

Forum

South Asia

May 5, 2009

Exposed jihadis put Pakistan on the spot

By Syed Saleem Shahzad

KARACHI - The high-profile arrest of a group of Pakistani militants in mid-April in the restive Afghan province of Helmand by the Afghan army and their subsequent handover to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for grilling exposed a jihadi network running to the heart of urban [Pakistan](#).

In the course of interrogation, the militants confessed to being recruited, trained and then launched into Helmand after spending some time in places such as the southern [port city](#) of Karachi and Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province.

They also gave details of their Pakistani leaders and their activities, including how these leaders could move around freely



Let's build a smarter planet.

and how they owned huge religious establishments.

The report of the interrogation of the militants, circulated to all tiers of NATO command, including the top military and diplomatic command, raises immediate questions on the competence and the commitment of the Pakistani government in controlling militants.

This event happened when there were already heated arguments between Islamabad and Western capitals on the handling of the militancy, especially in the Swat Valley, where there is a peace

Do You Know Your Credit Score?

FREE score.ca

TransUnion.

640

EQUIFAX

618

Experian

635

[Click Here to See Yours!](#)

[Print this article](#)

[Email this article](#)

[Currency converter](#)

[Comment on this article: Go to](#)



RELATED ARTICLES

[Behind the Afghan propaganda](#)
(May 2, '09)

[Ideas before bullets](#)
(May 1, '09)

[The myth of Talibanistan](#)
(May 1, '09)

READERS' PICKS

1. [Russia, China on comradely terms](#)

2. [Sorcery of the doomed](#)

3. [US hides behind Iran sanctions threat](#)

4. [The myth of Talibanistan](#)

5. [Farewell, the American Century](#)

6. [BOOK REVIEW: Behind the Afghan propaganda](#)



New delhi Hotels
Maldives Hotels
Sri lanka Hotels
Manila Hotels
Bali Hotels
Korea Hotels

Do You Know Your Credit Score?

TransUnion.

640

EQUIFAX

618

Experian

635

[Click Here to See Yours!](#)

FREE score.ca

treaty of sorts between the government and militants.

In the [United States](#), President Barack Obama, Central Command chief General David Petraeus and army head Admiral Mike Mullen have all raised questions over the competence of the Pakistani government, while expressing appreciation for the armed forces.

Mullen visited Pakistan twice in 10 days and met with President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, army chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kiani and opposition leader Nawaz Sharif, among others. The message was hammered home that it is Pakistan which is running out of time, and not a particular section of society or government. Therefore, the entire Pakistani national leadership has to move very quickly to [bury](#) political differences to fight against the threat of the Taliban.

The statements were not indicative of supporting a coup in Pakistan, but a clear warning for the entire Pakistani national leadership, whether in opposition or in the government. American officials have already spoken in detail of the need for them to develop a comprehensive consensus on national policy against the militancy. This would involve removing their mental blocks concerning the Taliban - whether for or against or because of political compulsions. In short, the leaders have been urged to remain focused on the US-led "war on terror".

Well-placed contacts have confirmed to [Asia Times Online](#) that as a follow-up of these warning messages from American officials, in the next few days Sharif will accept a power-sharing formula to join the government led by Zardari's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to fight against the Taliban.

In terms of this, powerful political slots will be offered to the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) group. In principle, former premier Sharif has agreed to the terms and will add his party's weight to the battle against the Taliban. Alternatively, if either the PML-N or the PPP refuses to accept the formula, a technocratic interim government under the auspices of the Pakistani armed forces might take over.

This development sets the stage for a new battle against the Taliban in Pakistan. And for the first time, Taliban command councils in southwestern Balochistan province and across the border in Helmand and Kandhar have warned their cadre to be aware of the possible changes in Islamabad.

Caught out

While US officials were shuttling back and forth to Pakistan, seven youths were seized by the Afghan National Army (ANA) in the Gramsir district of Helmand province.

Pakistani youths from the tribal areas and the cities have frequently been arrested or killed by NATO troops in Afghanistan. Most of these youngsters went to the country in the zeal of jihad, and they could usually be linked to particular stand-alone point-persons.

This time it was different.

Three of the men have been identified as Enyatur Rahman (North-West Frontier Province - NWFP), Saeed (NWFP) and Imran (Punjab). When they were apprehended along with the four others, a Pakistani Taliban commander named Mansoor, based in Helmand, aware of the possibility of them exposing a major

7. [The global politics of swine flu](#)

8. [Indus Valley code is cracked - maybe](#)

9. [A shot in the arm for Hezbollah](#)

10. [Now for the next 100 days ...](#)

(May 1-3, 2009)

Ads by Google

Nimsoft Solutions

Maximize IT
Performance &
User Experience
w/ Nimsoft
www.Nimsoft.com

How to make electricity

Don't pay for electricity, when you can make it simple & cheap at home.

Power4home.com

Government Land For Sale

Search 1000s Of Government Land Listings For Sale in Your Area.

www.LoopNet.com/GovernmentLand

[pakistan news](#)
[Canadian news](#)

South Asian Observer online
Read news for Indo-Canadians
www.SouthAsianObserve



Click Here For
Featured Artists/Resources

EMPRESS



FROZEN

KIYOMI



NEW MUSIC

GAVORNIAK



EXCHANGE



jihadi network inside Pakistan, tried his level-best to negotiate with ANA to prevent them from falling into the hands of NATO.

But a little mishandling caused ANA to turn them over to NATO.

There is an arrangement between the Taliban and ANA all over the south of Afghanistan, especially in Khost, Paktia, Paktika, Helmand and Ghazni provinces.

Under this, when ANA troops are sent on patrol inside Taliban areas, they pay the Taliban to avoid being killed. The price is arms, ammunition or rockets, which is handed over and then reported as having been lost during an encounter with the Taliban.

In turn, when ANA arrests any Taliban fighters, they demand cash money for their release. If the fighters are Pakistani or non-Afghan, ANA takes a little longer to negotiate a price, but if the fighters are Afghans, ANA personnel will not take unnecessary risks. Either they strike a deal then and there and release the Taliban fighters, or within a few days they hand them over to NATO. The reason is to avoid direct confrontation with the Afghan Taliban and their tribal constituencies, which could cause problems in any prolonged negotiations.

Under this arrangement, as the seven men were Pakistani, Mansoor started negotiations with ANA for the release of his men. ANA demanded US\$200,000, Mansoor countered with an offer of 2 million rupees (US\$25,000), which was refused. Mansoor then arranged for 10 million rupees to be paid, but since almost 10 days had passed, ANA handed the Pakistanis over to NATO.

Mansoor mishandled the situation on two counts. First, he did not involve the Afghan Taliban command, and secondly he took too long in reaching an agreeable figure.

Apparently, the youths soon began talking under interrogation. In particular, they gave details of a jihadi network known for its past association with the defunct Jaish-e-Mohammad. They also gave details of their backgrounds and how they were recruited and how they had spent time in different Pakistani urban centers, where the leaders of their network openly ran religious establishments.

This information was shared with concerned Pakistani quarters, but by that time all senior Pakistani Taliban commanders had gone underground. In the bigger picture, though, the incident provided [Washington](#) the ammunition it needed to really go after the Pakistan national leadership and warn that the entire country needed to stand up as one to fight against all sections and groups of the Taliban in the country. They reminded that it is not any particular government or political party, but the state of Pakistan that is running out of time.

This is where a new joint government involving Sharif could come into play, and Pakistan will once again be dancing to American tunes.

The Pakistani Taliban and their al-Qaeda allies obviously will not stand back. Al-Qaeda's command has already drawn up plans to stir up a reaction all across the country - the masses will be urged to show their allegiance in black and white.

Syed Saleem Shahzad is Asia Times Online's Pakistan Bureau Chief. He can be reached at saleem_shahzad2002@yahoo.com

(Copyright 2009 Asia Times Online (Holdings) Ltd. All rights reserved. Please contact us about [sales, syndication](#) and [republishing](#).)

All material on this website is copyright and may not be republished in any form without written permission.

© Copyright 1999 - 2009 Asia Times Online (Holdings), Ltd.

Head Office: Unit B, 16/F, Li Dong Building, No. 9 Li Yuen Street East, Central, Hong Kong
Thailand Bureau: 11/13 Petchkasem Road, Hua Hin, Prachuab Kirikhan, [Thailand](#) 77110