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THE BATTLE FOR PAKISTAN

Militancy and Conflict in North Waziristan

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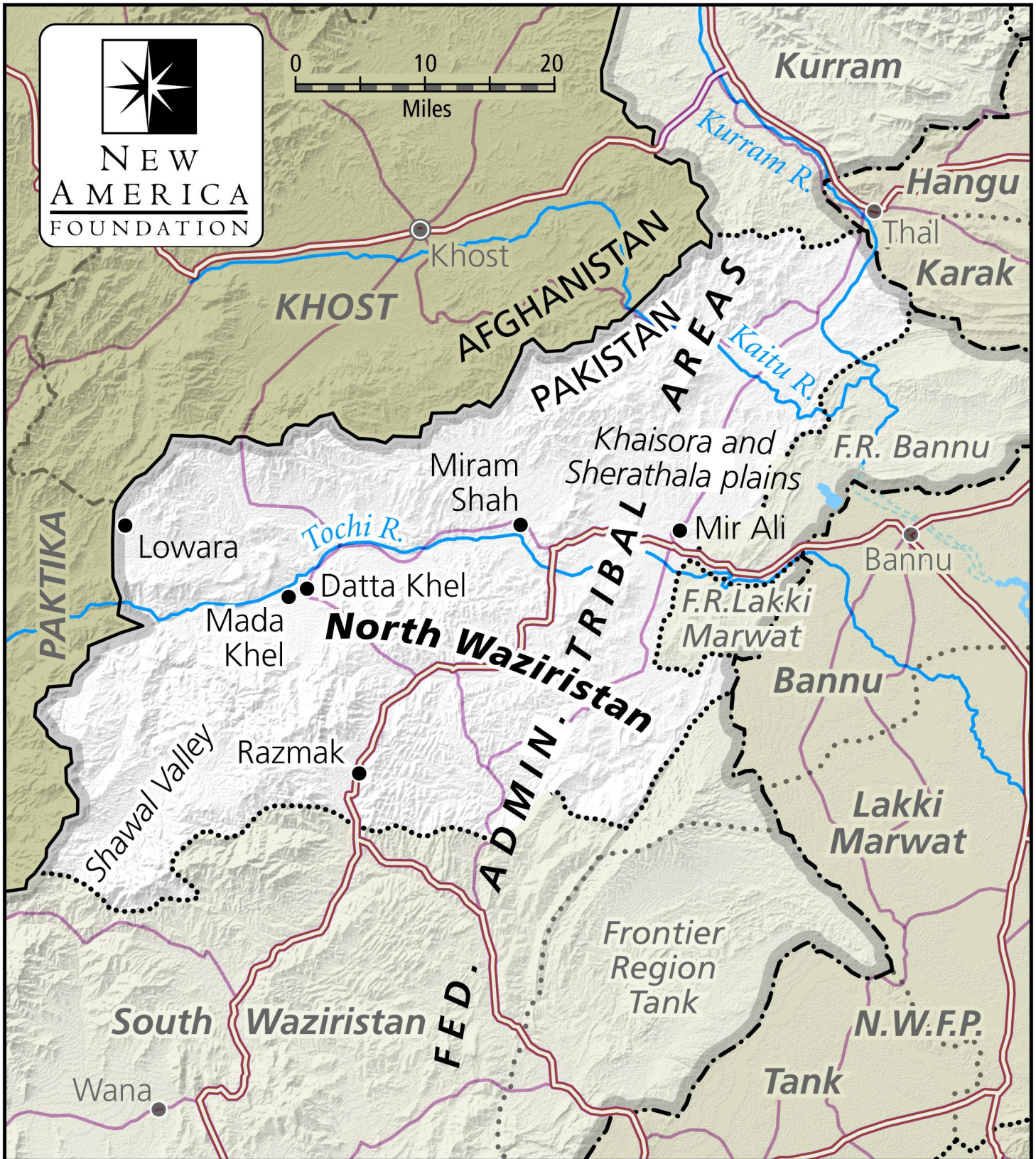
North Waziristan is the most important center of jihadist militancy in the FATA today, in large measure because of the impunity with which militants in the agency have operated. Even as the Pakistani government has confronted anti-Pakistan militant coalitions in other regions, it has largely ignored fighters in North Waziristan.

North Waziristan, the second-largest of Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, is the most important springboard for violence in Afghanistan today, much as it has been for decades. The most important militant group in the agency today is the Haqqani Network. The legendary Afghan *mujahideen* commander Jalaluddin Haqqani left his native Khost province and settled in North Waziristan's capital, Miram Shah, in the mid-1970s; his son, Sirajuddin, was raised in the area.¹ Jalaluddin quickly became the most important mujahideen commander in eastern Afghanistan during the 1980s; Sirajuddin now manages the network his father built, employing it to support violence against U.S. and NATO forces. Like his father, Sirajuddin uses North Waziristan to recruit, as a safe haven, and for strategic depth. North Waziristan is well-suited for all of these purposes because of its geographic isolation, difficult terrain, and relatively stable coalition of tribal militants.

Besides the Haqqanis, the largest militant coalition in North Waziristan is headed by Hafiz Gul Bahadur, of the Mada Khel clan of the Uthmanzai Wazir. Bahadur does not have the track record of his collaborators in the Haqqani clan, but he does have something they do not: a strong tribal base in the rugged mountains between Miram Shah and the Afghan border. This provides important strategic leverage over militants who must traverse his territory to reach Afghanistan. Bahadur's deputy, Maulana Sadiq Noor, is from the Daur tribe and leads a coalition of both Wazir and Daur tribesmen. Sadiq Noor is very close to the Haqqanis and Bahadur seems to follow Haqqani guidance on difficult questions, such as whether to attack Pakistani troops in the region.

North Waziristan has been a safe haven for successive waves of militants fleeing U.S. or Pakistani military operations. Shortly after the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in late 2001, thousands of Taliban members

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MAP BY GENE THORP OF CARTOGRAPHIC CONCEPTS, INC.

associated with the regime flooded into North Waziristan. Many took shelter in the agency's treacherous and heavily forested Shawal Valley, which became a refuge for all sorts of foreign militants, including those from al-Qaeda. Pakistani government forces subsequently targeted other Pakistani safe havens, including South Waziristan. In 2004, a wave of militants arrived in North Waziristan after being pushed out of South Waziristan's Shakai Valley. More recently, a variety of militants associated with the Mehsud tribe in South Waziristan is believed to have sought safe haven in North Waziristan.

North Waziristan Facts

North Waziristan is a mountainous, 4,707 square-kilometer (1,817 square miles) tribal agency that directly abuts Afghanistan to the west. Its capital and largest city is Miram Shah. North Waziristan was incorporated into Pakistan at its founding in 1947.

The major towns of North Waziristan are Miram Shah, Mir Ali, Datta Khel, and Razmak. The vast majority of North Waziristan residents are Pashtun, and the bulk of these hail from the Wazir and Daur tribes. Uthmanzai Wazirs dominate Datta Khel and Razmak along with most of the hilly regions, the Khaisora and Sherathala plains, the Kaitu valley, and lower stretches of the Kurram River valley. Daurs dominate Mir Ali, where they are known as Lower Daurs, as opposed to Upper Daurs, who live near Miram Shah.

North Waziristan consists of three subdivisions and nine tehsils. The Miram Shah subdivision comprises the Miram Shah, Ghulam Khan, and Datta Khel tehsils. The Mir Ali subdivision contains the Mir Ali, Spinwam, and Shawa tehsils. The Razmak subdivision consists of the Razmak, Dossali, and Garyum tehsils.

Militants in North Waziristan have tended to be less fractious than their cousins in South Waziristan, largely by avoiding divisive tribalism. But the divisions among North

Waziristan militants are important. For example, Rasool Khan leads a group of fighters who chafe at Bahadur's prominent role in the agency. Khan's support for Uzbek fighters—who have angered many Pakistani militants—is one reason, but Khan's operation also seems to have a strong criminal element that may seek greater autonomy. Similarly, a contingent of foreign and local fighters led by Abu Kasha al-Iraqi has squabbled with Bahadur's chief commander, Sadiq Noor, who resents the Abu Kasha group's foreign leadership. As in other parts of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the most common strategic disagreements are over the role of Arab and Central Asian fighters and whether to attack Pakistani targets in addition to U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

Although they are not tribal, the disputes among militants in North Waziristan do have a geographic element. Bahadur's stronghold is west of Miram Shah; the militants opposed to his leadership tend to operate in and around Mir Ali, which is slightly farther from the border with Afghanistan. The Haqqani Network seems to have a powerful mediation role among militants in North Waziristan. Both Jalaluddin and Sirajuddin Haqqani are widely respected, and the younger man has intervened many times over the past five years to resolve disputes among militant groups in North Waziristan and other areas of the FATA. The Haqqanis' reputation of effective military action in Afghanistan gives them influence over North Waziristan militants who lack their own networks across the border. Moreover, the Haqqanis' long relationship with the Pakistani military and intelligence establishment makes them effective interlocutors between militants and the Pakistani state. And despite their differences, the militants know that internal squabbling weakens the effort in Afghanistan and makes each group susceptible to pressure from the Pakistani military.²

Military Operations in North Waziristan

The Pakistani military has not conducted major military operations against militants in North Waziristan, though it

clashed with fighters before signing peace agreements in 2006 and 2008. Indeed, the relationship between militants and the Pakistani military has been relatively cooperative in North Waziristan. Under the terms of a peace agreement operative in 2009, vehicles driven by Taliban members are exempt from rules stipulating that all vehicle occupants must be searched at Pakistani military checkpoints. Only the Taliban drivers are searched. The effect is that the Taliban can easily smuggle people and weapons around North Waziristan. The peace agreements have created other gaps for the Taliban to exploit. For example, the 2008 agreement seems to have stipulated that Pakistani security personnel manning checkpoints in North Waziristan must operate unarmed.³

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But North Waziristan has been the primary location of U.S. drone strikes in the FATA, a clear indication of the importance that U.S. officials place on the militants operating there. From 2004 to 2007, six of nine U.S. drone strikes in the FATA were conducted in North Waziristan. In 2008, 20 of 34 drone strikes were conducted there. In 2009, 22 of 53 strikes took place in North Waziristan, but the pace accelerated dramatically after October 17, when drone attacks in South Waziristan were halted ahead of the Pakistani military offensive there.⁴ The trend has continued into 2010; as of March 31, 26 of 27 drone strikes have been conducted in North Waziristan, including at least 13 in Bahadur's heartland in the mountains between Miram Shah and the Afghan border.⁵

The structure of the insurgency

The Haqqanis

The Haqqani Network, based in Miram Shah, is one of the most important militant groups operating in Afghanistan against U.S. and NATO troops. Operating primarily in Loya Paktiya—the Afghan provinces of Paktiya, Paktika and Khost, which border North and South Waziristan—the network also has a significant presence in Logar and Wardak provinces, and in the capital, Kabul.⁶ Jalaluddin Haqqani, the aging former anti-Soviet insurgent leader, nominally leads the network, although in practice his son Sirajuddin has assumed day-to-day command. During the 1980s, Jalaluddin earned a reputation as one of the most effective and skillful mujahideen leaders fighting the Soviets. He built extensive links with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI), the American CIA, and Arab fighters in the region, including Osama bin Laden.⁷ Despite fighting in Afghanistan, Jalaluddin has always had a strong base in North Waziristan. Indeed, his decision to launch an uprising against Afghanistan's Soviet-backed communist government reportedly took place at a meeting of Afghan refugees at the Hay al-Muhajareen mosque in Miram Shah in the spring of 1978.⁸ During the anti-Soviet *jihad*, Jalaluddin operated under the Yunus Khalis faction of the Hizb-i Islami mujahideen party, an arrangement that provided political cover and access to resources. Although Jalaluddin was well-educated, he was primarily a military commander, earning his greatest victory in 1991 when he captured the city of Khost from the post-Soviet communist regime in Kabul.

Jalaluddin ceded power to the Taliban when they arose in the mid-1990s, perhaps partly due to ISI pressure, and officially took a position as the minister for borders and tribal affairs in the Taliban government. In practice, however, he and his fighters never fully accepted Taliban authority, especially over Loya Paktiya, and remained essentially an independent but allied force.⁹

After the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, Jalaluddin and his allies returned to Miram Shah, much as they had in the face of threats in the mid-1970s. Jalaluddin Haqqani's legacy in Miram Shah is apparent in many areas, but especially at Haqqani-run *madrassas*, which have provided food and lodging to a generation of religious students in the area. Although Jalaluddin is widely respected among militants in North Waziristan for his role in the anti-Soviet jihad, his relationship with tribal leaders in the agency is complex. The Haqqanis come from the Zadran tribe, which is based in Afghanistan's Khost province, and their lack of tribal roots in North Waziristan has occasionally prompted scorn from tribal leaders in the agency, even in the 1980s.¹⁰ This weakness has likely empowered Hafiz Gul Bahadur, who does have tribal roots in North Waziristan.

Within months of arriving in Miram Shah after the fall of the Taliban regime in Kabul, Jalaluddin went into semi-retirement and his son, Sirajuddin, began to manage the movement. Today Sirajuddin enjoys unparalleled prestige among the militant groups in North Waziristan, and as such has often been called upon by the Taliban leadership to mediate between feuding guerrilla factions. Sirajuddin was born in 1979, but is the most senior Haqqani Network commander; even elders such as Jalaluddin's brothers—Haji Khalil and Ibrahim—serve under him.¹¹ Sirajuddin's leadership role at such a young age suggests that his father continues to exert power in the background on behalf of his son.¹²

Sirajuddin's ties in Pakistan are deep. He was raised in mujahideen camps around Miram Shah and, like his father, attended the Darul Uloom Haqqania madrassa in Akora Khattak, near Peshawar in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province.¹³ Despite lacking the religious credentials of his father, who is a maulavi (high-ranking religious scholar), Sirajuddin is described by associates as more devout than Jalaluddin.¹⁴



Jalaluddin Haqqani, 2001 // Visual News/Getty Images

Haqqani Network Structure in North Waziristan

The Haqqani Network's organizational base is Miram Shah, where it operates from at least three compounds: the Miram Shah bazaar camp, which contains a madrassa and computer facilities; a compound in the suburb of Sarai Darpa Khel; and another in the suburb of Danday Darpa Khel, where members of Jalaluddin's family reside.¹⁵ Most major financial decisions, the organization of weapons acquisition and delivery, and the development of overall military strategy take place in Miram Shah.

As with other Afghan insurgent groups, the Haqqanis' funds come from a variety of sources. Some of Sirajuddin's brothers are believed to travel to the Persian Gulf region to raise money, relying on Jalaluddin's networks from the mujahideen years and more recently established contacts.

Within Afghanistan, commanders receive some cash and weapons from the group's leaders in Miram Shah, but they are also expected to raise their own funds; methods include the collection of donations through mosques, taxation of trade in areas under their control, extortion from trucking companies, and cross-border smuggling.¹⁶ The Haqqanis have also been implicated in a variety of kidnapping-for-ransom schemes, including the abduction of New York Times reporter David Rohde. One of Sirajuddin's brothers, Badruddin, demanded millions of dollars for the release of Rohde and two Afghan colleagues.¹⁷

The network broadly consists of four groups: those who had served under Jalaluddin during the Soviet era; those from Loya Pakiya who joined the movement since 2001; those from North Waziristan who have been associated with Haqqani or his madrassas over the years; and foreign (non-Pashtun) militants, including Arabs, Chechens, and Uzbeks. While Haqqani Network fighters on the ground in Afghanistan belong to a number of tribes, the vast majority of the network's leaders in North Waziristan are from the Zadran tribe, and in particular from Haqqani's Mezi clan and its allies. This does not, however, mean that the Haqqani movement is simply tribal; rather, under the secretive conditions in which the group operates, only those bound closely by family or clan ties can win the leadership's trust. Those in the first group, who served under Jalaluddin, enjoy the most power. Newcomers from Loya Pakiya and foreign (non-Pashtun) commanders typically are not part of the inner leadership circle.¹⁸

At the top of the network is Sirajuddin Haqqani, who oversees the group's political and military activities and is the main liaison to the Quetta Shura Taliban.

The Haqqani Network's North Waziristan leadership—usually called the Miram Shah Shura—consists of a

number of Haqqani family members and closely associated long-serving commanders. At the top of the network is Sirajuddin Haqqani, who oversees the group's political and military activities and is the main liaison to the Mullah Muhammad Umar-led Quetta Shura Taliban, the Taliban's leadership body (named for the capital of Pakistan's Baluchistan province). He is also one of the network's liaisons to Pakistani Taliban figures and al-Qaeda. He travels regularly into Afghanistan to coordinate with field commanders and occasionally to Peshawar and South Waziristan to connect with militants there.¹⁹

Sirajuddin's deputy commander is Bakhti Jan, a prominent figure in North Waziristan politics who has played an important role liaising with the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other Taliban groups based in North Waziristan. Jan, who is considered Sirajuddin's closest adviser, comes from a family of Islamist rebels—eight of his brothers fought against the Soviets under Jalaluddin and Yunus Khalis. Today many of his brothers and uncles are Haqqani commanders active in Loya Pakiya.²⁰

Sirajuddin's political deputy is Jan Baz Zadran. Unlike the rest of the Miram Shah Shura, Baz Zadran is not a military commander and does not have experience fighting under Jalaluddin. However, he hails from the Haqqanis' home village of Srani in the Garda Tseray district of Pakiya and is one of Sirajuddin's most trusted associates.²¹ He is in charge of Haqqani Network finances and weapons and ammunition acquisitions, a position that gives him considerable authority in the movement.

A number of Haqqani family members also are involved in the Miram Shah Shura. These include the longtime commanders Haji Khalil and Ibrahim, two brothers of Jalaluddin, and Badruddin and Nasiruddin Haqqani, two of Jalaluddin's sons. Nasiruddin, who is Sirajuddin's half brother by way of Jalaluddin's Arab wife, can speak Arabic and has acted as a liaison with al-Qaeda figures. For instance, senior al-Qaeda commander Abu Laith al-Libi (who was killed in a drone attack in 2008) was close to

Nasiruddin.²² Before the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, Abu Layth worked for Ibn al-Shaykh al-Libi, head of the Khaldan training camp, which was located in Haqqani territory in Khost province.

The remainder of the Miram Shah Shura is made up of Afghan and Pakistani commanders who split their time between North Waziristan and the front lines in Afghanistan. Among the prominent Afghan commanders are Nai Arsallah and Maulavi Noor Kasim, both from the Sabari district in Khost, and Muhammad Amin, Mira Jan, and Bahram Jan, from Khost's Ali Sher district. Most of the Pakistani commanders have been associated with the Haqqanis since Soviet times. The most prominent was Darim Sedgai, believed to have been behind some high-profile assaults in Kabul. Sedgai was killed by "unknown gunmen" in early 2008.²³

Traveling frequently between Afghanistan and Pakistan, these commanders serve as the main link between Sirajuddin and the field commanders, although by 2009 Sirajuddin had been increasingly going to the front lines himself.²⁴ There are many field commanders in Afghanistan, but turnover is high because many get killed or captured. The most prominent are Mullah Sangin, who is believed to be holding Pfc. Bowe Bergdahl, a captured U.S. soldier, and Zakim Shah, the movement's shadow governor of Khost province.

The field commanders typically recruit the group's rank and file, often from the commanders' home villages and districts. Unlike many Taliban members, who when not fighting work as farmers or do not work at all, a significant proportion of Haqqani fighters double as madrassa students. Many of them attend madrassas in North Waziristan, especially those built or funded by Jalaluddin's network. This may contribute to the more radicalized, ideological orientation of some Haqqani fighters relative to the Quetta Shura.

The Relationship Between the Haqqani Network and the Quetta Shura

The relationship between the Haqqani Network and the Quetta Shura Taliban movement, led by Mullah Omar, is complicated. The Haqqani movement has distinct historical and ideological roots from the Taliban. Jalaluddin Haqqani initially resisted the Taliban when they first entered Paktiya and Khost in the mid-1990s, but he was eventually persuaded by some of his associates (and possibly the Pakistani ISI) to accept Taliban rule. Thus he became the most prominent mujahideen commander to submit to the Taliban's authority. This created a unique situation in which Haqqani functioned as an independent commander within the Taliban government. Throughout the Taliban years, he maintained a group of fighters who worked directly for him in his role as a front-line commander against the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance or in his various ministerial positions.

Some analysts argue that Osama bin Laden himself may have brokered the deal between Mullah Omar's Taliban and Jalaluddin. The al-Qaeda leader told the senior Palestinian journalist Abdel Bari Atwan that he personally persuaded Jalaluddin to cooperate with the Taliban's final assault on Kabul in 1996.²⁵ This was "a huge favor," according to Atwan, because the Taliban needed formalized military training—which they did not have—to crush the city's defenders.²⁶ Bin Laden's claims are hard to verify, but some sources indicate that Haqqani and the Taliban already had an accommodation in the spring of 1995, a year before bin Laden returned to Afghanistan.²⁷

Today the Miram Shah Shura operates autonomously within the Taliban movement.

Such mediation might have been helpful because the Haqqanis and the Taliban did not see eye-to-eye on everything. Jalaluddin Haqqani was opposed to some

Taliban measures such as banning music, enforcing beard length, and limiting women's access to education.²⁸ In fact, a U.S. State Department assessment found him to be "more socially moderate" than the Taliban despite long-standing ties with bin Laden.²⁹

The Haqqanis regrouped in North Waziristan after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan because of their historical links to the area. Most of the early commanders and fighters for Haqqani after 2001 were men who had served directly under him during the Soviet and Taliban eras. Therefore, the Haqqanis were able to carry their organizational independence into the post-9/11 Afghan insurgency.

Today the Miram Shah Shura operates autonomously within the Taliban movement. It maintains a separate command and control apparatus, as outlined above, but the leadership is integrated into Mullah Omar's organization. Jalaluddin Haqqani holds a position in the Quetta Shura, while Sirajuddin Haqqani is the Quetta Shura Taliban's head military commander for Loya Paktiya.³⁰ As a consequence, it is estimated that almost 90 percent of the militant fighters within Loya Paktiya are part of the Haqqani Network.³¹ There are almost no "Taliban fighters," as distinct from Haqqani Network fighters, in this region; rather, these men are under the command of Sirajuddin, who acts as a representative of the Quetta Shura Taliban but with a high degree of autonomy.

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The Haqqani Network issues statements only under the name of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan—the name of the ousted Taliban government. The Haqqanis prefer to avoid any reference to themselves as distinct from the Taliban, perhaps to avoid disunity among the insurgent ranks. For instance, Sirajuddin told one of the authors in an

interview that "there is no such thing as the Haqqani Network. We are under the command of Mullah Muhammad Omar and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan."³²

The Miram Shah Shura coordinates activities with the Quetta Shura Taliban in the areas of Loya Paktiya, Logar, and Kabul. Sirajuddin typically meets Quetta Shura leaders in South Waziristan or Peshawar, but rarely travels to Quetta.³³ In Logar and Kabul, the Quetta Shura Taliban and the Haqqani Network operate side-by-side. In particular, the Haqqani Network has been authorized by the Quetta Shura to carry out attacks in Kabul, and has installed a head of operations (Maulavi Tajmeer) who is based there.³⁴

This arrangement has enabled the Haqqani Network to expand into areas where it did not historically have influence, such as Kabul. In some cases, Sirajuddin has used tribal connections and his father's old mujahideen network to expand even further afield. One of the most important insurgent leaders in the northern Afghan province of Kunduz, for instance, is a Haqqani-aligned commander named Mullah Inayatullah. Based in Chahar Dara district, Inayatullah is from Haqqani's Zadran tribe and has nearly a dozen sub-commanders serving under him.³⁵

The Haqqani Network's coexistence with the Quetta Shura Taliban sometimes causes tensions. For instance, a Haqqani Network attack on a U.N. guesthouse in Kabul in October 2009 was conducted without the sanction of the Quetta Shura. The incident strained relations between the groups, since the Quetta Shura has been keen to avoid attacks on the United Nations in order to promote an image that it is a respectable government-in-waiting.³⁶

In other instances, the Haqqani Network and the Quetta Shura Taliban have even acted as competitors. The Quetta Shura Taliban largely controlled Logar province in the years before 2008.³⁷ But the Taliban treated locals with a heavy hand, sometimes harassing village elders and forcing

civilians to give fighters food and shelter. Foreign fighters, mostly Pakistanis, frequented the area, which further alienated residents. Eventually, villagers forcibly evicted the Taliban from some areas and made it clear to others that the Taliban were not welcome. As a result, much of the province was left with a power vacuum, which neither the coalition forces nor the Afghan government filled.

The Haqqani Network moved into the vacuum. It reestablished networks with Logar-based commanders who had served under Jalaluddin in the 1980s (particularly in the province's southeast, which borders Paktiya) and built relations with local Quetta Shura commanders who had not alienated the local community. By 2009, the Haqqani Network was the main insurgent group in many parts of Logar.

The Relationship Between the Haqqani Network and the Taliban Groups in Pakistan

The Haqqanis have a similarly complex relationship with militants in North Waziristan. By many accounts, Sirajuddin Haqqani enjoys unparalleled prestige within the militant landscape of North and South Waziristan, which derives from his family legacy and his role in the Afghan insurgency. (Baitullah Mehsud, for instance, who went on to lead the TTP, fought under Jalaluddin Haqqani in Afghanistan during the 1990s).³⁸ The Quetta Shura and, by some accounts, Pakistan's ISI have asked Sirajuddin to intervene in the frequent internecine conflicts that have erupted between local Taliban commanders in the Waziristans, and in conflicts between Pakistani militants and the state.³⁹

The Haqqani Network's post-9/11 relationship with Waziristan commanders was built when Haqqani paid North Waziristan tribal leaders to smuggle Afghan and Arab fighters out of Afghanistan in the face of U.S. attacks.⁴⁰ In North Waziristan, Sirajuddin developed links to Maulana Sadiq Noor, a key deputy of Hafiz Gul Bahadur, who supplied fighters and suicide bombers to the Haqqani

Network in Afghanistan. He similarly developed ties to Mullah Nazir in South Waziristan, who trained and supplied suicide bombers for the network.⁴¹ In some cases, the Haqqani Network has drawn fighters from South Waziristan-based militant leaders, such as Qari Hussain, who have moved their training camps into North Waziristan when under Pakistani military pressure.⁴² The Haqqani Network has relied on such connections because it generally has not run its own suicide training camps.⁴³

The Haqqanis' first significant move into Pakistani militant politics was in the summer of 2006 in North Waziristan, when Sirajuddin and Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah arranged a cease-fire between Bahadur's forces and the Pakistani government, which had been fighting an on-again, off-again war for almost two years.⁴⁴ The two, carrying letters from Mullah Omar and Jalaluddin Haqqani, asked the Pakistani militants to direct their energies against the U.S. forces in Afghanistan and not the Pakistani government.⁴⁵ The accord was criticized in the West for allowing al-Qaeda and Taliban militants to have a safe haven from which to launch attacks in Afghanistan.

Sirajuddin and Bakhti Jan also regularly intervened in local politics in South Waziristan.

Haqqani Network commander Bakhti Jan has played a pivotal role in such negotiations. In 2006 he acted as a Haqqani representative to the North Waziristan tribal communities and helped persuade key Pakistani militant commanders to consider a one-month cease-fire so talks could be initiated.⁴⁶ A document, signed by Jan and the late Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Osmani, was distributed. It said:

"The policy of the Emirate-i-Islami [Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan] is that we do not want to fight Pakistan. All those, whether ansaars [locals]

or mohajirs [refugees] who are [sympathetic] with the [cause of the] Emirate-i-Islami are hereby informed that they should stop fighting Pakistan because fighting Pakistan benefits Americans.”⁴⁷

Sirajuddin and Bakhti Jan also regularly intervened in local politics in South Waziristan. They established Taliban councils in 2006 to help mitigate tensions between locals, Pakistani Taliban commanders, and foreign (especially Uzbek) militants. In early 2007, the two, together with the Taliban’s Mullah Dadullah, established a Taliban council meant to govern South Waziristan, and promoted Mullah Nazir as the council’s leader.⁴⁸ When clashes erupted between Nazir and Uzbek militants in the spring of 2007, the Haqqanis interceded again to establish a “supreme council” that would be the final arbiter of all decisions made by other Taliban councils. Bakhti Jan served on this body.⁴⁹ Jan was also involved in the February 2008 peace deal between Baitullah Mehsud and the Pakistani government.

The Haqqanis also played a role in the February 2009 agreement by Hafiz Gul Bahadur, Mullah Nazir, and Baitullah Mehsud that launched the Shura Ittihad-ul-Mujahideen, a united front among the three commanders. Sirajuddin and Bakhti Jan worked for months, meeting the commanders a number of times, to bring the three to an agreement.⁵⁰ Both Haqqani and Quetta Shura leaders pushed the unification in an effort to have the commanders work together and focus their fire on Afghanistan. The alliance appears to have broken down after the death of Baitullah Mehsud in August 2009.⁵¹

The Relationship Between the Haqqani Network and Foreign Militants

Jalaluddin Haqqani established contact with Arab fighters very early in the anti-Soviet war. In 1981, American journalist Jere Van Dyk traveled with Haqqani in Afghanistan and was confronted by a fundamentalist Egyptian named Rashid Rochman.⁵² Although Rochman

was generally disliked by Jalaluddin’s men, who were turned off by his extremism, the mujahideen leader favored the man. Rochman gleefully questioned Van Dyk about the recent assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, an attack that landed future al-Qaeda second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri in an Egyptian prison. It seems likely that Jalaluddin understood that relationships with Arabs such as Rochman could be a fundraising boon for his movement. Jalaluddin still maintains ties through marriage to the Persian Gulf, and much of the Haqqani Network’s funding comes through such relationships.⁵³ In addition, the movement maintains ties to al-Qaeda and the Uzbek Islamic Jihad Union, and has used its leverage with other militants to protect foreign fighters.⁵⁴

Al-Qaeda and aligned groups have two main roles in the Haqqani Network: facilitating attacks and providing suicide bombers.

Osama bin Laden built a relationship with the Haqqanis in the mid-1980s when he spent months along the front lines with Jalaluddin.⁵⁵ The relationship has paid dividends for both parties. In the 1980s, bin Laden’s wealthy family and royal connections in Saudi Arabia would have been indispensable for a mujahideen leader like Jalaluddin, and the elder Haqqani’s military success offered bin Laden the opportunity to exaggerate his own role in those operations. Indeed, bin Laden’s ties to Haqqani were much deeper than those he had with Mullah Omar’s Taliban government, which ultimately operated from Kandahar and Kabul. Jalaluddin and bin Laden had much more in common than bin Laden and the illiterate leader of the Taliban. They had shared history from the anti-Soviet jihad. Jalaluddin spoke Arabic and had an Arab wife. Bin Laden may even emulate some of Jalaluddin’s leadership affectations. The Afghan commander toted a relatively rare AK-74 assault rifle in the early 1980s as a symbol of his leadership; bin Laden was given the same model by a top lieutenant, Abu Ubaidah al-

Banshiri, after the Lion's Den battle in 1987 and subsequently carried it everywhere, including in Sudan.⁵⁶ Al-Qaeda and aligned groups have two main roles in the Haqqani Network: facilitating attacks and providing suicide bombers. Attack facilitation includes providing training, weapons expertise, and arms and funding procurement. Haqqani compounds in and around Miram Shah have housed a number of al-Qaeda weapons stashes.⁵⁷

In recent years, however, as the Haqqani Network has developed and al-Qaeda's operational reach has declined, this facilitation role has diminished.⁵⁸ Al-Qaeda, the Islamic Jihad Union, and other groups still provide suicide attackers, however. A number of high-profile assaults in Kabul have used al-Qaeda-trained attackers for commando-style suicide missions. For instance, the attack on the U.N. guesthouse in October 2009 used a number of non-Afghans thought to have been trained by al-Qaeda.⁵⁹

The Haqqani leadership's direct contact with al-Qaeda figures is minimal today, however, partly because drone attacks make communications difficult and risky.⁶⁰ Moreover, the relationship is reportedly strained because of the Haqqanis' ties to the Pakistani state—an enemy of al-Qaeda. Pakistani authorities have conducted a number of raids on Haqqani compounds that house al-Qaeda men and supplies, but Haqqani fighters are often left untouched. This prompted al-Qaeda to grow gradually closer to militants in South Waziristan, such as those led by Baitullah and later Hakimullah Mehsud, who are also at war with the Pakistani government.⁶¹

It is hard to determine exactly how the Haqqani Network fits ideologically with the al-Qaeda organization. Former and current Haqqani Network commanders say that their movement is closer to the Quetta Shura's nationalist rhetoric than al-Qaeda's vision of global jihad, but some members of the group espouse al-Qaeda-like language. The Haqqanis have avoided the anti-Pakistan rhetoric common to al-Qaeda and the TTP. In June 2006, Jalaluddin Haqqani's office released a letter arguing that attacking

Pakistan "is not our policy. Those who agree with us are our friends and those who do not agree and [continue to wage] an undeclared war against Pakistan are neither our friends nor shall we allow them in our ranks."⁶² Sirajuddin Haqqani has gone further, explaining in an interview that he opposed "any attempt by Muslims to launch attacks in non-Muslim countries."⁶³ In May 2009, he argued to two French journalists: "It is a mistake to think that al-Qaeda and the Taliban are pursuing the same aim. Al-Qaeda is trying to spread its influence throughout the world. This does not interest us. The Taliban's aim is to liberate Afghanistan from foreign troops."⁶⁴

The Haqqani leadership's direct contact with al-Qaeda figures is minimal today, partly because drone attacks make communications difficult and risky.

However, former Haqqani Network commanders say the movement is unlikely to break ties with al-Qaeda unless it is forced to do so by military or diplomatic pressure.⁶⁵ It is unclear whether all Haqqani Network commanders agree with Sirajuddin's efforts to separate the group from al-Qaeda. Mullah Sangin, an important field commander, said in an interview with *as-Sahab*, al-Qaeda's media arm: "We do not see any difference between Taliban and al-Qaeda, for we all belong to the religion of Islam. Sheikh Usama has pledged allegiance to Amir Al-Mumineen [Mullah Muhammad Omar] and has reassured his leadership again and again. There is no difference between us."⁶⁶ New York Times journalist David Rohde, who was kidnapped by Haqqani supporters and held captive in North Waziristan for seven months before his escape, argued that he "did not fully understand how extreme many of the Taliban had become. Before the kidnapping, I viewed the organization as a form of 'Al Qaeda lite,' a religiously motivated movement primarily focused on controlling Afghanistan."

Living side by side with the Haqqanis' followers, I learned that the goal of the hard-line Taliban was far more ambitious. Contact with foreign militants in the tribal areas appeared to have deeply affected many young Taliban fighters. They wanted to create a fundamentalist Islamic emirate with Al Qaeda that spanned the Muslim world.⁶⁷

The Haqqani Network: Tactics and Strategy

The Haqqani Network has shown more sophistication and daring than other insurgent outfits in Afghanistan, most strikingly in a series of high-profile assaults in urban centers. The first such operation was a raid on the luxury Serena Hotel in Kabul in early 2008. In subsequent months the group undertook similar attacks, many of which were near-simultaneous assaults on multiple prominent targets. Other attacks in Kabul included an attempt to assassinate President Hamid Karzai, two separate car-bomb strikes against the Indian Embassy, and a simultaneous raid on various government offices. Typically, foreign militants have carried out these assaults.⁶⁸ In particular, the Haqqani Network employs what it calls the "Hamza brigade," a team of operatives who organize and deploy suicide attackers.⁶⁹ Pakistani militants such as Mullah Nazir and Maulana Sadiq Noor, and occasionally Arab groups, do most of the recruiting and training of suicide bombers before passing them on to the Haqqanis.⁷⁰

In 2009, the network began launching similar attacks in smaller, less well-guarded urban centers, including Gardez in Paktiya province, Khost city, and Pul-i-Alam in Logar province. In an interview with the Taliban's magazine *Al-Sumud*, Haqqani commander Maulavi Noor Kasim explained that the purpose of such assaults was "to show the enemy the extent of the mujahideen's ability to operate and carry out military attacks in the heart of the city, and our ability to strike directly at the military and government command centers."⁷¹

In rural areas, the Haqqani Network relies on roadside bombs and hit-and-run tactics, much like the Taliban. Unlike the Taliban, however, it does not have an extensive shadow government apparatus in the areas it controls. In parts of Ghazni and Helmand provinces, for instance, the Taliban have full-blown administrations in place, with taxation, rudimentary development work, and a judiciary. Most areas of Haqqani control lack such institutions, but in parts of Loya Paktiya the group has been known to employ Islamic judges to adjudicate disputes.⁷²

The Haqqanis and the Pakistani State



Afghan policemen inspecting the wreckage of the Indian embassy in Kabul after a Haqqani-linked bombing. // SHAH MARAI/AFP/Getty Images

The Haqqanis have had a long relationship with the ISI, beginning during the anti-Soviet insurgency when Jalaluddin was a favored ISI (and CIA) commander. This relationship continues today; Pakistani intelligence officials reportedly see the Haqqanis as a valuable asset for promoting their interests in Afghanistan. For instance, a car bombing at the Indian Embassy in Kabul in the summer of 2008 was a joint operation between ISI operatives and Haqqani fighters, according to Afghan and U.S. intelligence officials. The attack specifically targeted two senior Indian officials, including the defense attaché, who was killed. ISI officials provided detailed intelligence to Haqqani operatives about the Indian officials' route and time of arrival. The suicide bomber reportedly timed his

detonation precisely for the moment when the defense attaché arrived at the embassy gates.⁷³

Jalaluddin Haqqani summed up Pakistan's motives for supporting militants in Afghanistan in an interview just as the Taliban regime was falling in 2001. He said:

On Pakistan's Eastern border is India—Pakistan's perennial enemy. With the Taliban government in Afghanistan, Pakistan has an unbeatable 2,300 km strategic depth, which even President Pervez Musharraf has proudly proclaimed. Does Pakistan really want a new government, which will include pro-India people in it, thereby wiping out this strategic depth?⁷⁴

Those associated with the Haqqani Network, and U.S. intelligence officials, say that ISI support of the Haqqanis is neither direct nor straightforward. Figures associated with Pakistani intelligence have provided small amounts of funding and training to Haqqani Network fighters, but their biggest role is providing a safe haven and intelligence.⁷⁵

Officials associated with the ISI tip off Sirajuddin before raids on Haqqani compounds in Miram Shah.

According to current and former Haqqani Network fighters, officials associated with the ISI tip off Sirajuddin before raids on Haqqani compounds in Miram Shah. Haqqani fighters then gather important documents and flee to mountain hideouts, where they wait until it is safe to return. The system is imperfect for some; the raids often net weapons and occasionally provide intelligence that leads to the capture or death of al-Qaeda figures, which has caused tensions between the Haqqani Network and al-Qaeda.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the relationship allows the Haqqanis an invaluable safe haven that leaves the group's operational

commanders sometimes seeming more amused than frightened by the Pakistani army.⁷⁷

The Haqqani Network's safe haven in North Waziristan allows the leadership to avoid U.S. military operations in Afghanistan (excepting cross-border drone strikes), but it also creates complications. Former and current Haqqani Network fighters complain about Pakistan's power over the group—and the precarious state in which it leaves them.⁷⁸ The spate of arrests of Taliban leaders in Pakistan in the winter of 2010 illustrates this position. Pakistan has even arrested a number of high-ranking Haqqani commanders, including Bakhti Jan, over the years. Almost all of these figures were later released, but the arrests serve as a potent reminder of Pakistan's power over the movement. In an interview, a Haqqani commander claimed that "Pakistan can pull the rug out from under us at any moment."⁷⁹

Hafiz Gul Bahadur and the Tribal Militants

Besides the Haqqanis, Hafiz Gul Bahadur is the most important Pakistani militant leader in North Waziristan. He is believed to be 45 years old and is from the Mada Khel clan of the Uthmanzai Wazir tribe, which is based in the mountains between Miram Shah and the border with Afghanistan. He is a resident of the village of Lawara and is a descendant of the Faqir of Ipi, a legendary fighter known for his innovative insurrection against British occupation in the 1930s and 1940s.⁸⁰ Bahadur is a cleric and studied at a Deobandi madrassa in the Punjabi city of Multan. Bahadur fought in Afghanistan during the civil war that followed the Soviet withdrawal and upon returning to North Waziristan became a political activist in the Islamist party Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazel ur-Rahman), or JUI-F.⁸¹ He rose to prominence in 2004 following Pakistani military operations in North Waziristan and coordinates closely with the Haqqanis on both strategy and operations in Afghanistan.⁸² Today, Bahadur has more 1,500 armed men under his direct command.

Strategy and Relationships

Bahadur is a strategic pragmatist, maintaining constructive relations with a host of militants in North Waziristan and beyond while avoiding confrontation with the Pakistani state that might initiate a powerful crackdown. He has joined alliances with Baitullah Mehsud and his successors—leaders of the anti-Pakistan TTP—but has carefully refrained from provoking a harsh backlash from the government. Not surprisingly, Bahadur's tightrope walk carefully parallels that of the Haqqanis, who are favorites of the ISI and with whom he is co-located. Like the Haqqanis, Bahadur focuses his military efforts on U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

Bahadur's relationship with Taliban militants in other FATA agencies is complex. Although he led North Waziristan fighters against Pakistani security forces in 2006 and 2008, he also signed two peace agreements with the Pakistani government, then proceeded not to fully implement either.⁸³ Bahadur has moved in and out of coalitions with other Pakistani Taliban elements, but has always aimed to maintain productive relationships with them. Most recently, he left a coalition of anti-Pakistan militants in 2009 after the death of Baitullah Mehsud, but still offered safe haven to Mehsud fighters fleeing Pakistani government operations in South Waziristan.

The TTP, commonly known as the Pakistani Taliban, was formed in December 2007 as a coalition to unite militant groups across the FATA and in settled areas of North-West Frontier Province (NWFP)^a.⁸⁴ At its formation, Baitullah Mehsud of South Waziristan was named emir and Bahadur his deputy. The alliance was somewhat surprising because Bahadur maintained a strong relationship with Baitullah's most important rival from South Waziristan, Mullah Nazir. Moreover, Bahadur was frustrated with Uzbek militants backed by Baitullah, many of whom relocated to areas near Mir Ali in North Waziristan after being evicted from

Nazir's territory in South Waziristan. In addition, although the TTP was founded as an explicitly anti-Pakistan alliance, Bahadur began negotiations with Pakistan almost as soon as the coalition was announced.⁸⁵ Not surprisingly, he did not stay in the TTP very long, leaving in July 2008, whereupon he and Nazir created a separate alliance opposed to Baitullah's insistence on fighting Pakistani government forces.⁸⁶ Some reports suggest that the Bahadur-Nazir coalition was backed by the Haqqanis as a way to mitigate the power of Baitullah Mehsud.⁸⁷ Yet even the new anti-Mehsud alliance did not last long. In February 2009—at the prodding of Sirajuddin Haqqani—Baitullah Mehsud, Mullah Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadur announced the formation of the Shura Ittihad-ul-Mujahideen (SIM), or Council of United Mujahideen.⁸⁸ The SIM was designed to end hostilities among the factions, and reportedly included an agreement that pardoned all parties for past wrongs.⁸⁹ The agreement was holding in June 2009 when forces loyal to Bahadur attacked a military convoy in North Waziristan that was supporting Pakistan's South Waziristan operations against Mehsud.⁹⁰ Such attacks on key logistical routes into South Waziristan severely threaten the viability of Pakistani operations against Mehsud-dominated TTP strongholds because there are very few roads in and out of Mehsud territory. Recent reports suggest, however, that the SIM became defunct after the death of Baitullah Mehsud in August 2009, and there have been no reports of major violence between Bahadur's forces and Pakistani troops since.⁹¹

Baitullah Mehsud,
2004 (front) // A
Majeed/AFP/Getty



^a The NWFP is being renamed "Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa."

Bahadur has hedged his bets since the June 2009 convoy attack and seems to have largely allowed Pakistani troops to pass through North Waziristan, while simultaneously offering anti-Pakistan South Waziristan militants safe haven in North Waziristan. It is unclear exactly how Baitullah Mehsud's death affected relations between Bahadur and the Mehsud elements led by Baitullah. Some sources suggest that the SIM alliance collapsed after Baitullah was killed, while others suggest that his death did not damage relations because Baitullah's successor and cousin, Hakimullah, is considered close to Bahadur.⁹² (Hakimullah is believed killed in a January 2010 drone strike, though the Pakistani Taliban has denied that he is dead.)

Bahadur's most important commander is Maulana Sadiq Noor of the Daur tribe. Sadiq Noor is around 45 years old and has had close contacts with the Afghan Taliban since 1996, when they formed the government in Afghanistan. Like Bahadur, Sadiq Noor is based near Miram Shah, where he directs the Mamba-ul-Uloom madrassa, originally built by Jalaluddin Haqqani to support the Afghan jihad against the Soviet occupation in the 1980s. The madrassa and a neighboring housing complex served as Sadiq Noor's headquarters until a U.S. drone strike in September 2008.⁹³ Although the strike did not kill Sadiq Noor, there were conflicting reports that either nine of his family members or nine members of the Haqqani family were killed in the attack.⁹⁴ Such confusion is understandable, considering Sadiq Noor's close connections with both Jalaluddin and Sirajuddin Haqqani and the shared legacy of the Mamba-ul-Uloom compound. Sadiq Noor has about 800 fighters in his group.

Sadiq Noor's right-hand man in North Waziristan is Saeed Khan Daur, who plays something of a *consigliere* role. Saeed Khan is also from Miram Shah. Although he is younger than either Sadiq Noor or Bahadur—he is 33 or 34 years old—Saeed Khan has a university degree and is known as a computer expert. Rumors suggest that his code

name is Aryana, but he is rarely seen and avoids the media.⁹⁵

Maulana Abdul Khaliq Haqqani is another of Bahadur's commanders, also of the Daur tribe. He is based in Miram Shah and is reported to have around 500 armed men in his group. Abdul Khaliq follows Bahadur's delicate balancing act between TTP militants and the Pakistani government. Nonetheless, local actors expect that Abdul Khaliq would support militant resistance to the Pakistani army in the face of a full-scale incursion.⁹⁶

Wahidullah Wazir leads a militant group of 200 Wazir tribesmen around Miram Shah. The Wahidullah group is involved in cross-border attacks in Afghanistan, but also conducted operations against the Pakistani military in 2006 and 2008. Similarly, Halim Khan Daur, a 35-year-old militant based near Mir Ali who leads about 150 men, is primarily involved in cross-border attacks on NATO forces, but also actively engaged the Pakistani army in 2006 and 2008.⁹⁷

A variety of militant groups in North Waziristan do not operate under Bahadur's direct leadership, for either personal or political reasons.

Another Bahadur ally in North Waziristan is Saifullah Wazir, a local Uthmanzai Wazir based near Shawal, a notorious hideout for foreign militants in North Waziristan. He is very close to Bahadur and represented him for the 2006 peace agreement between militants and the Pakistani government. He reportedly has 400 men in his militia, many of whom are active against U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. He is also known to fight the Pakistani army.⁹⁸

A variety of militant groups in North Waziristan do not operate under Bahadur's direct leadership, for either personal or political reasons. One is led by a Wazir tribesman from Miram Shah named Zanjir, who focuses attacks on U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. Unlike Bahadur and most other militants in the region who trace their political roots to the JUI-F faction, Zanjir is politically affiliated with Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-i Islami.⁹⁹

Rasool Khan Daur runs an independent militia around Mir Ali, where he is a schoolteacher. Bahadur had appointed Khan head of the Mir Ali bazaar area but removed him in 2009, after which Khan started his own militant group. It now has between 120 and 150 men. Khan's group is known for its extensive criminal activities, which may have prompted his dismissal by Bahadur. The group's militants do not strike U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, but are known to target Pakistani security forces and installations in North Waziristan.

One of the more important independent militant leaders is Maulana Manzoor Daur. His support base is Eidak—a village near Mir Ali on the Mir Ali-Miram Shah road. He reportedly has nearly 300 Taliban fighters under his command and is widely believed to have a strong support base among foreign militants. This support created tension with Bahadur and Sadiq Noor after they tried to evict some foreign militants from North Waziristan in 2006. Manzoor's militia fights both in Afghanistan against U.S. and NATO forces and in Pakistan against the Pakistani army.¹⁰⁰

One other independent militant group in North Waziristan is led by Haq Nawaz Daur, a 45-year-old religious scholar from the Daur tribe. He operates near Mir Ali, hails from the nearby village of Aisori, and has very good relations with foreign militants who have worked in the area, especially Uzbeks. This has similarly caused tension with Sadiq Noor and Bahadur. Haq Nawaz avoids fighting the

Pakistani army and is reported to have about 300 men under his command.

Foreign Militants

In addition to his tribal troops, Haq Nawaz works closely with an Arab faction led by Abu Kasha, an Iraqi jihadist who has been based near Mir Ali since 2002. Abu Kasha, whose real name is Abdur Rehman, lives in Mir Ali with his wife and sons.

Abu Kasha is an interesting figure because he has not always cooperated with mainstream al-Qaeda. He left the group in 2005 after disagreeing with its increasingly Egyptian leadership, notably Ayman al-Zawahiri. Although Abu Kasha retains strong ties to the organization, he founded an independent group called Jaish al-Mahdi, which reportedly has 250 to 300 followers, including local Daur tribesmen, Uzbeks, Chechens, Tajiks, and Turkmens. Abu Kasha has very close links with members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and its splinter group, the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU).¹⁰¹

Abu Kasha has worked hard to integrate himself into the local society and is now widely regarded as a local leader.

Abu Kasha has worked hard to integrate himself into the local society and is now widely regarded as a local leader. He is known in the region for attending every funeral and marriage ceremony around Mir Ali. Some of Abu Kasha's local supporters even consider him a saint (*pir*) as a result of a 2006 incident in which he took shelter in the home of a local Pashtun during a Pakistani military operation. Upon leaving, he promised the owner that his house would not be destroyed, after which Pakistani troops tried repeatedly but failed to bring down the house with dynamite. Since then, locals in Mir Ali have approached Abu Kasha to purchase amulets in hopes of resolving their problems—with profits

promised to be used for the jihad against U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. Abu Kasha also serves as a local judge, mediating disputes for a substantial fee of between 20,000 and 500,000 rupees (up to almost \$6,000).¹⁰² Those reluctant to pay are compelled to do so by Abu Kasha's well-armed militiamen, who assert that the money is used for the fight in Afghanistan. Abu Kasha has recently played an important role supporting TTP militants fleeing the fighting in South Waziristan.¹⁰³

Abu Kasha is not on good terms with Maulana Sadiq Noor, Hafiz Gul Bahadur's powerful commander. Sadiq Noor objects to Abu Kasha's prominent role in Mir Ali, particularly his intercession in tribal customs and dispute resolution. Like many militants in the FATA, Abu Kasha has become very security-conscious, especially after an October 31, 2008, drone strike in which he was almost killed. He now moves at the sound of a drone and does not stay in any one place for more than a few days.¹⁰⁴

Al-Qaeda

Foreign militants in North Waziristan are based mostly in Mir Ali and Miram Shah, near the border with Afghanistan. Abu Kasha is in Mir Ali, as is Najmuddin Jalolov, leader of the Islamic Jihad Union. U.S. drone strikes have targeted al-Qaeda figures in North Waziristan and have killed a number of senior leaders, such as Abu Laith al-Libi and Abu Jihad al-Masri. On December 8, 2009, a U.S. drone targeted Saleh al-Somali, an al-Qaeda member charged with planning attacks abroad.¹⁰⁵ The Arabs of al-Qaeda are said to live in the Shawal mountains, Mir Ali, and the Miram Shah area.

Al-Qaeda's propaganda also illustrates the importance of North Waziristan to its operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Al-Qaeda's propaganda also illustrates the importance of North Waziristan to its operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the 89 al-Qaeda propaganda videos released from 2004 to 2009 illustrating al-Qaeda "attacks" in Afghanistan, 47 incidents occurred in Loya Paktiya, the Haqqani heartland just across the border from North Waziristan.¹⁰⁶ Although al-Qaeda fighters may not have conducted the violence portrayed, the geographic focus demonstrates the group's relationship with the Haqqani Network and its ability to operate in the region.

Islamic Jihad Union

The Islamic Jihad Union's most important base in North Waziristan is in Mir Ali, where it receives local support from a variety of Pakistani tribal commanders. The IJU's stated purpose is to overthrow the secular government of Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan. In the past five years, however, it has organized a variety of attacks and provided training for the so-called Sauerland cell that planned to attack U.S. military bases and other targets in Germany in 2007. The IJU is led by Najmuddin Kamolitdinovich Jalolov (emir), Suhayl Fatilloevich Buranov (deputy emir), and Muhammad Fatih.¹⁰⁷

The IJU was founded in Pakistan in 2002 as a splinter of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Today the group has 150 to 200 members, most of whom are Uzbek, but including Tajik, Kyrgyz, and Kazakh fighters. The group is known to have strong relationships with Chechen fighters in the FATA and has produced a host of propaganda material in Turkish.¹⁰⁸

Conclusion

North Waziristan is the most important center of jihadist militancy in the FATA today, in large measure because of the impunity with which militants in the agency have operated. Even as the Pakistani government has confronted anti-Pakistan militant coalitions in other regions, it has largely ignored fighters in North Waziristan. The Haqqani

Network and Hafiz Gul Bahadur have been politically sensitive and very careful to avoid upsetting the Pakistani authorities, but have nonetheless occasionally clashed with the Pakistani government. Both the Haqqanis and Bahadur have worked closely with TTP elements from South Waziristan. In late 2009 and into 2010, they sheltered fighters from the Mehsud group fleeing the Pakistani military in South Waziristan. The Haqqanis clearly have strong ties with al-Qaeda militants operating in and around North Waziristan, and they likely support al-Qaeda's goal of reestablishing a caliphate. Nonetheless, the network's leaders seem firmly focused on Afghanistan. Although they tolerate and may tacitly support al-Qaeda's attacks elsewhere, the Haqqanis are unlikely to expand their field of operations as long as the current leadership is in charge.

Drone strikes have been a compelling tool against militants in North Waziristan, though their impact on local public opinion is difficult to discern. The current campaign of drone attacks has frightened North Waziristan's militants and perhaps presages more aggressive Pakistani military action in the region. The United States promptly halted drone strikes in South Waziristan when the Pakistani military began major operations there in October 2009, but intensified drone attacks farther north. These hints of coordination raise the possibility that the uptick in drone strikes in North Waziristan is designed to lay the groundwork for future Pakistani operations.

Although they tolerate and may tacitly support al-Qaeda's attacks elsewhere, the Haqqanis are unlikely to expand their field of operations as long as the current leadership is in charge.

Whatever the signs of a more aggressive approach toward militants, it is unlikely that Pakistan will take decisive action to crush the Haqqani Network. The Haqqanis

understand Pakistan's strategic thinking—including its extreme focus on India—and will continue efforts to forestall a Pakistani crackdown by illustrating the group's usefulness against that enemy. The arrests of Mullah Baradar, the Quetta Shura's second-in-command, and other Afghan Taliban leaders in the first months of 2010 suggest that Pakistani state policy toward militant networks may be changing, but it is unclear by how much or whether the Haqqanis would even be included in a Pakistani crackdown on Mullah Omar and the Quetta Shura. Indeed, the North Waziristan militants remain enigmas precisely because they are so powerful militarily, but creative politically. They show deep pragmatism and yet have clearly been influenced by al-Qaeda's ideology. They are likely to negotiate with the Afghan government, but there are no indications they are in the mood to cut a deal. The combination of military power, strategic utility to Pakistan, and political savvy suggests that North Waziristan's militant groups will be Pakistan's most difficult to dismantle.



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8 Mustafa Hamid (Abu Walid al-Masri), "Jalal al-Din Haqqani, a Legend in the History of the Afghanistan Jihad," *Al-Sumud Magazine* In English: <http://www.ansari.info/showthread.php?t=20201>

9 Former Haqqani associates: Hanif Shah Hosseini, Malim Jan, Madde Khan Hajji Zadrán, Arsala Rahmani, AG interviews.

10 Jere Van Dyk, BF interview, March 17, 2010.

11 Sirajuddin Haqqani Interview with AfPax Insider April 7, 2009, http://www.afpax.com/index.php/post/7478/Talibans_Siraj_Haqqani_Shrugs_Off_5_m_Bounty_Malim_Jan_and_Ghani_Muhammad_commanders_who_were_close_to_Sirajuddin_in_Miram_Shah_gave_similar_information_saying_he_is_under_30_years_old.

12 Jere Van Dyk, BF interview, March 17, 2010.

13 Sirajuddin Haqqani, AG interview, October 2009.

14 Ghani Muhammad (Haqqani commander) AG interview, February 2010.

15 Former Haqqani commander, AG interview, May 2009, Paktiya province; Farhat Taj, "Target: terror secretariat," *The News International*, April 4, 2009, http://www.thenews.com.pk/editorial_detail.asp?id=170708

16 Former Haqqani commanders, AG interviews, May 2009, Paktiya province; February 2010, Kabul.

17 David Rohde, "You Have Atomic Bombs, but We Have Suicide Bombers," *The New York Times*, October 20, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/glogin?URI=http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/20/world/asia/20hostage.html&OQ=_rQ3Di&OP=14cba970Q2FQ24ut_Q24d8ToL88sVQ24VI1Q5DQ24qIQ24VIQ24u8LQ7DdQ24JoXJQ24Vly8osJQ5EtSysQ3AQ7D

18 This typology is based on numerous interviews with current and former Haqqani Network figures

19 Former Haqqani commanders, AG interviews, May 2009, Paktiya province; February 2010, Kabul.

20 There are reports that Bakhti Jan died in late 2009, at the age of 50, while on pilgrimage to Mecca, but they have not been confirmed.

21 Haqqani commanders Ghani Muhammad, Malim Jan, AG interviews, February 2010.

22 Former Haqqani commander, AG interview, May 2009, Paktiya province.

23 Combined Joint Task Force-82 Press Release, "Coalition Forces Confirm Darim Sedgai Death," CJTF-82 January 26, 2008, www.cjtf.com/press-releases-manmenu-326/272-coalition-forces-confirm-darim-sedgai-death.html

24 The author (AG) has sent Afghan associates to interview Sirajuddin and they have reported that he spends considerable time in Loya Paktiya, and particularly Paktika. This might be partly explained by the C.I.A. drone campaign in the tribal areas, which makes it dangerous for Haqqani to spend too much time there.

25 Abdel Bari Atwan, *The Secret History of al-Qaeda*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 2006.

26 Abdel Bari Atwan, in Peter Bergen *The Osama bin Laden I know*, Free Press, New York 2006, p. 236.

27 For Jalaluddin "declared for the Taliban," see: Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars*, p. 293

28 Former Jalaluddin associates Arsala Rahmani, Hanif Shah Hosseini, Khan Jaji, interviews, March-May 2009.

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30 Sirajuddin Haqqani, AG interview, January 2010.

31 ISAF intelligence official, AG interview, October 2008.

32 Sirajuddin Haqqani, AG interview, October 2009.

33 Ghani Muhammad, AG interview, February 2009.

34 Maulavi Tajmeer, AG interview, February 2010.

35 Muhammad Razaq Yaqubi (Kunduz Province Chief of Police), AG interview, March 2010.

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