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JEFFREY A. DRESSLER

AFGHANISTAN REPORT 6

THE HAQQANI NETWORK

FROM PAKISTAN TO AFGHANISTAN



INSTITUTE FOR THE
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MILITARY ANALYSIS AND EDUCATION
FOR CIVILIAN LEADERS

Cover photo: Members of an Afghan-international security force pull security on a compound in Waliuddin Bak district, of Khost province, Afghanistan, Apr. 8, 2010. During the search, the security force captured a Haqqani facilitator, responsible for specialized improvised explosive device support and technical expertise for various militant networks. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Mark Salazar/Released)

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1400 16th Street NW, Suite 515, Washington, DC 20036.

<http://www.understandingwar.org>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeffrey A. Dressler is a Research Analyst at the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) where he studies security dynamics in southeastern and southern Afghanistan. He previously published the ISW report, *Securing Helmand: Understanding and Responding to the Enemy* (October 2009). Dressler's work has drawn praise from members of the Marine Corps and the intelligence community for its understanding of the enemy network in southern Afghanistan and analysis of the military campaign in Helmand province over the past several years. Dressler was invited to Afghanistan in July 2010 to conduct research for General David Petraeus following his assumption of command.

Dressler has briefed a range of audiences on topics related to the war in Afghanistan. He was invited to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina to brief a Marine Battalion prior to their deployment to Afghanistan, and has held similar pre-deployment briefings for civilians headed to Afghanistan. Dressler has also conducted briefings for Congressional audiences and members of the press, including correspondents from *The New York Times*, Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC. Additionally, Mr. Dressler's commentary, articles and opinion editorials have been featured by numerous outlets, including *Real Clear World* and *Small Wars Journal*. Mr. Dressler received his Bachelor's Degree from the Political Science Honors Program at the University of Connecticut, graduating summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) is a non-partisan, non-profit, public policy research organization. ISW advances an informed understanding of military affairs through reliable research, trusted analysis, and innovative education. We are committed to improving the nation's ability to execute military operations and respond to emerging threats in order to achieve U.S. strategic objectives.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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KEY FINDINGS

- The Haqqani network, which has the backing of elements within the Pakistani security establishment, is one of Afghanistan's most experienced and sophisticated insurgent organizations.
 - Although the Haqqani network is officially subsumed under the larger Taliban umbrella organization led by Mullah Omar and his Quetta Shura Taliban, the Haqqanis maintain distinct command and control, and lines of operations.
 - Siraj Haqqani, the son of the famous anti-Soviet fighter Jalaluddin Haqqani, is the current leader of the Haqqani network. Siraj is more extreme than his father and maintains closer ties to al-Qaeda and other foreign extremists in Pakistan.
- The Haqqani network maintains a safe haven in North Waziristan, Pakistan, across Afghanistan's southeastern border. The Pakistani Army has consistently refused to launch a military operation in North Waziristan despite the presence of al-Qaeda senior leadership.
 - Elements within the Pakistani security establishment continue to view the Haqqani network as a useful ally and proxy force to represent their interests in Afghanistan. To this end, Haqqani forces have repeatedly targeted Indian infrastructure and construction projects in Afghanistan.
- Between 2002 and 2004, the Haqqani network reconstituted their operations in their historical stronghold of Loya-Paktia, which encompasses the provinces of Khost, Paktia and Paktika in southeastern Afghanistan.
 - The Haqqani network was able to expand beyond Loya-Paktia towards Kabul from 2005 to 2006, providing the network with the ability to execute attacks in the Afghan capital.
 - From 2008 to 2009, the network launched an offensive aimed at strengthening their positions in Loya-Paktia, while projecting suicide bombers into Kabul to launch some of the most lethal attacks of any insurgent group in Afghanistan.
- Until recently, U.S. and coalition troops lacked sufficient forces to reverse the momentum of the Haqqani network. The massive increase of special operations forces over the past year, combined with the increase in the number of conventional forces to execute counterinsurgency operations, is beginning to disrupt and degrade the Haqqani network's infrastructure and operations.
- An increased drone campaign against senior Haqqani safe havens in North Waziristan has disrupted the network's ability to plan and execute operations, and have targeted al-Qaeda senior leadership and other foreign terrorists.
- Despite recent progress, Haqqani network operations can regenerate if not continually pressured. Therefore, efforts to neutralize the Haqqani network's operation in Afghanistan require continuous and aggressive counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan in addition to sustained counterinsurgency operations in key populations in and around the Southeast.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Continue to check the Haqqani network's expansion.** Although the network has been disrupted in and around Afghanistan's capital of Kabul, it will continue to seek ways to establish a foothold, possibly through alliances with other insurgent groups operating in the area.
- **Erode the support base of the Haqqani network in the Southeast.** The majority of mixed-tribal support for the Haqqani network comes from a handful of districts in the southeastern province of Khost. There are signs of rifts between Haqqani network commanders and tribal elders over issues such as civilian casualties. The International Assistance Security Force (ISAF) and where possible, the Afghan Army and Afghan provincial officials, must expand outreach to these areas in order to build relationships and earn trust.
- **Expand the current Special Forces operational tempo.** The increase in special operations forces over the past year has allowed for improved targeting of insurgent leaders and their operations, especially against the Haqqani network in southeastern Afghanistan. The tempo and successful execution of these raids are having serious effects on the Haqqani network's ability to resource and conduct attacks.
- **Expand the drone campaign in Pakistan.** The Haqqani network's stronghold across the border in North Waziristan, Pakistan have become an area of refuge for al-Qaeda and other regional and international terrorist organizations. The recent increase in drone strikes against the Haqqanis' safe havens in Pakistan has successfully killed senior insurgent leadership and disrupted their ability to plan and execute attacks. The U.S. should continue to ratchet-up the pressure through increased drone strikes.
- **Conduct limited, unilateral raids by special operations forces on Haqqani command and control nodes in North Waziristan.** Pakistan could do more against Afghan-focused insurgent groups. In the case of the Haqqani network, they do not want to because the Haqqanis remain a valuable proxy force representing their interests. Although drone strikes are effective, limited, unilateral raids by U.S. special operations forces should be used when necessary to kill or capture key Haqqani and al-Qaeda leaders. These select, covert raids can provide invaluable intelligence to expand the understanding of the Haqqani network and allow for more effective targeting of the network on both sides of the border.

KEY PLAYERS: MILITANTS**INDIVIDUALS**

Jalaluddin Haqqani – Former Mujahideen commander from Khost and former leader of the Haqqani network, now led by his son Siraj. Jalaluddin is believed to serve in an advisory role.

Siraj Haqqani – Son of Jalaluddin Haqqani. Currently serves as the leader of the Haqqani network.

Badruddin Haqqani – Son of Jalaluddin Haqqani. Operational commander of the Haqqani network.

Baitullah Mehsud – Former Mujahideen fighter under Jalaluddin Haqqani. Led the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) until 2009, when he was killed by a drone strike.

Hakimullah Mehsud – Former driver and trusted understudy of Baitullah Mehsud who became the leader of the TTP following Baitullah Mehsud's death.

Mufti Waliur Rehman – A top Baitullah Mehsud deputy who lost the power struggle with Hakimullah Mehsud for leadership of the TTP following Baitullah Mehsud's death.

Maulvi Nazir – Tribal leader in South Waziristan distinct from the TTP. Nazir is believed to provide men, materials and training to the Haqqanis.

Mullah Omar – Leader of Afghan Taliban (QST) and Commander of the Faithful, a term referring to a leader of an Islamic community ruled by Shari'ah law. Omar led the Taliban-run government of Afghanistan prior to their overthrow in 2001.

Hafiz Gul Bahadar – Tribal leader of a large militant coalition based in North Waziristan, controlling most of the territory between Miram Shah and the Afghan border. Bahadar maintains a close relationship with the Haqqani network.

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar – Former Mujahideen and leader of Hizb-i-Islami (HiG). Hekmatyar maintains independence from the QST and the Haqqani network.

GROUPS

The Haqqani Network – The Haqqani network is currently led by Siraj Haqqani, operating out of North Waziristan, Pakistan. The network wages their insurgency primarily in Afghanistan's southeastern provinces but is capable of conducting operations as far as the Afghan capital of Kabul. They maintain the closest ties with Al Qaeda out of all the insurgent groups active in Afghanistan.

The Quetta Shura Taliban (QST) – The QST is the Taliban led by Mullah Omar, thought to be based out of Quetta, Pakistan. The QST is the former governing body of Afghanistan and the most virulent and geographically diverse insurgent movement operating in Afghanistan.

Hizb-i-Islami Gulbuddin (HiG) – HiG maintains a military and political wing and is nominally headed by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the famous anti-Soviet Mujahideen. HiG is distinct from the Taliban and Haqqani networks and operates primarily in eastern Afghanistan.

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) – A Pakistani-based insurgent group currently led by Hakimullah Mehsud. The TTP is currently engaged in a defensive Jihad against the Pakistani state and seeks to implement Shari'ah law in Pakistan and Afghanistan in addition to defeating U.S. and ISAF forces in Afghanistan.

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) – Historically, a Kashmiri-focused group, LeT has been sending fighters to Afghanistan since 2006 and has since increased its collaboration with Al Qaeda.

Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) – A smaller Kashmiri-focused group that was founded with support from Osama bin Laden. Similar to LeT, JeM has also been sending fighters to Afghanistan since 2006 and has since increased its ties with Al Qaeda.

Sipah-e-Sahaba – Punjabi extremist group known to be operating in North Waziristan. It controls many of the Sunni madrassas in Pakistan which produce a significant number of potential suicide bombers used by Haqqani and others for attacks in Afghanistan.

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) – Punjabi extremist group affiliated with Al Qaeda which is known to be operating in North Waziristan.

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) – The IMU is a coalition of Islamic militants from Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states. It maintains close ties with Al Qaeda and other foreign terrorists operating out of the Pakistani border region. Since 2001, the IMU has been predominantly occupied with attacks on U.S. and Coalition soldiers in Afghanistan.

Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) – Foreign fighter group and offshoot of the IMU that includes Kurdish, Uzbek, Azerbaijani, Turkish, and German foreign terrorists, as well as Al Qaeda and Al Qaeda affiliated terrorists such as Arabs, Chechens, and others that cohabitate with Haqqani network in and around Miram Shah and have been known to resource attacks in Afghanistan.

THE HAQQANI NETWORK

FROM PAKISTAN TO AFGHANISTAN

By Jeffrey A. Dressler

2010 is a critical year in the nearly decade-long fight in Afghanistan. Although the majority of resources and attention have been focused on southern Afghanistan, insurgents remain active throughout the entire country. In the east, U.S. forces have been engaged in a particularly difficult fight against a battle-hardened insurgency in arduous terrain. The Haqqani network is an insurgent group operating primarily in the southeastern provinces of Afghanistan. Today, the network is led by Sirajuddin Haqqani (also known as Siraj or Khalifa), the son of famous Mujahedeen commander and former CIA asset Jalaluddin Haqqani.

The Haqqani network has been at war for much of the last thirty years. Although the network wages its insurgency in Afghanistan, it is operationally and strategically headquartered in North Waziristan, Pakistan and enjoys the support and protection of elements of the Pakistani intelligence establishment.

In the absence of sufficient U.S. forces, the Haqqani network was able to consolidate their control of southeastern Afghanistan and expand beyond their territorial stronghold to the Afghan capital. The Haqqani network has been responsible for many of the high-profile, spectacular attacks that have occurred in Kabul over the past several years. With the help of al-Qaeda and other regional and international terrorist groups, the Haqqanis represent a formidable foe.

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was unable to make inroads against the Haqqanis until 2009, when U.S. forces began targeting the network's infrastructure in and around Kabul. This campaign has recently grown throughout southeastern Afghanistan. Over the past year, the number of U.S. special operations forces in Afghanistan has quietly grown by fifty to sixty percent.¹ The majority of these forces are focused on targeting Haqqani infrastructure, including low and mid-level commanders and facilitators who are key logistical nodes for the resourcing of Haqqani operations in and around the Southeast. These

special operations forces, in combination with an increasing number of conventional forces on the ground, have made significant inroads against the Haqqani network. These efforts have also been complemented by an increased drone campaign against Haqqani safe havens in North Waziristan. U.S., coalition, and Afghan forces in Afghanistan have reversed the momentum of the Haqqanis and have reduced the efficacy of the enemy group.

This report provides a detailed understanding of the Haqqani network, from its beginning in the 1970s, to the network's current efforts against U.S., coalition, and Afghan forces. The first section discusses the formation of the network, including its early alliances with the Taliban and Osama bin Laden. The second section analyzes the network's operations in Afghanistan, including its tribal base, current leadership, and expansion since 2005. The final section details the ongoing offensive against the network on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and discusses why this expanded campaign has the potential to degrade the network further.

THE HAQQANI NETWORK'S FORMATION AND EARLY ALLIANCES

The Haqqani network has its earliest roots in the anti-Daud offensive of the mid-1970s. Prime Minister Mohammad Daud Khan's 1973 overthrow of the monarchy of King Mohammad Zahir Shah



MAP 1 | AFGHANISTAN

was seen as an unwelcome development by many hard-line Islamists. Haqqani and his followers, many of whom were royalists supporting the king, traveled to Pakistan to receive military training to combat Daud's new regime.

Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto also perceived Daud's pro-Pashtun policies and close ties with Soviet-linked communists as a threat to Pakistan's interests.² Daud was supportive of Pashtun nationalists' campaign for an autonomous region called Pashtunistan, a predominately Pashtun area along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. It was in these areas that Bhutto's support of pro-Islamist fighters such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar began. Bhutto's support increased following the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) coup on April 27, 1978. The PDPA was a communist political party that was at odds with Daud and eventually, with the help of the Afghan Army, helped overthrow him. The turmoil that followed the assassination of Daud resulted in the Soviet Union's decision to invade Afghanistan to prop up the communist government in December 1978.³ Afghanistan was later renamed the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, a reflection of the country's new status as a client state of the Soviet Union.

It was around this time that Jalaluddin Haqqani first established a presence in North Waziristan's Miram Shah.⁴ Jalaluddin was born in Paktika. He is a member of the Pashtun Zadran tribe, which is concentrated within Loya-Paktia, or greater Paktia, which consists of the provinces of Paktia, Paktika, and Khost. Jalaluddin received his early education from a private madrassa, or religious school, in Afghanistan, but later attended the Dar-ul-Ulum Haqqani Madrassa in Akora Khattak located in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly NWFP).⁵

From 1976 to 1979, Haqqani was a member of the executive committee of Hizb-i Islami, one of the most radical of the anti-Soviet resistance movements, along with notorious anti-Daud personalities such as Hekmatyar, Younis Khalis, and Burhanuddin Rabbani.⁶ Khalis and Rabbani subsequently split from Hekmatyar's Hizb-i Islami in 1979, and his group became known as Hizb-I



PHOTO 1 | JALALUDDIN HAQQANI

Islami-Khalis.⁷ That year, after a jirga (traditional assembly) of Paktia tribes met in Miram Shah, Haqqani became the key Hizb-I Islami-Khalis commander for the Southeast.⁸ Jalaluddin Haqqani's role and that of Hizb-i Islami-Khalis grew significantly between 1981 and 1984. Haqqani managed to maintain a great degree of control over the complex tribal regions of Loya-Paktia, and even extended his control beyond Zadran tribal areas.⁹ As his power base grew, Haqqani was able to solidify his position amongst the Zadrans after he ousted the powerful Babrakzay family from their influential position atop the tribal leadership hierarchy.¹⁰ Haqqani's forces seized the cities of Khost and Urgan from the PDPA's Soviet-backed forces in 1983. Haqqani's skill and reputation as a capable military commander enabled him to establish a number of military units and a shura (an Arabic word for consultation) council in Paktia from 1986 to 1987, even though his network never maintained a strict organizational structure.¹¹ Haqqani led his own forces and also acted as a coordinator for other Zadran forces. For large offensives against the Soviets, Haqqani reportedly relied on other tribes as a force multiplier.¹²

The relationship between Jalaluddin Haqqani and al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was forged in the mid-1980s, within the context of anti-Soviet resistance. Between 1984 and 1986, bin Laden was contracted by Pakistan's Directorate for Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) to engineer humanitarian and building projects in support of the anti-Soviet Mujahedeen (Muslim warriors on a jihad) near Miram Shah in Pakistan.¹³ Bin Laden

also constructed an elaborate cave complex in the Haqqani-controlled territory of Jaji, Paktia in 1986. Dubbed the “Lion’s Den,” the area was used for training Arab volunteers to fight in Afghanistan.¹⁴ When al-Qaeda was formed in 1988, its newly built installations and infrastructure were supervised by Haqqani.¹⁵ Haqqani also operated his own fundraising offices in the Persian Gulf and hosted numerous Arab volunteers who pledged to fight the Soviets.¹⁶ During the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, he would raise money for the anti-Soviet resistance.¹⁷

Haqqani also maintained a relationship with the ISI, American, and Saudi intelligence organizations—ties that proved beneficial to all parties during the mid to late 1980s, as Haqqani’s power base and tactical competency grew. During the 1980s, Haqqani’s “most favored” status and close ties with these intelligence agencies meant that he received the majority of the “war materials” being sent to the Afghan front lines, including Stinger missiles, weapons, ammunition, provisions, and cash.¹⁸ American officials were even known to meet with Haqqani in his stronghold of Miram Shah, describing him as a “unilateral asset.”¹⁹ Texas Congressman Charlie Wilson called him “goodness personified.”²⁰ One U.S. intelligence official who knew Haqqani said, “He could kill Russians like you wouldn’t believe.”²¹ Haqqani would often travel to Islamabad to meet with ISI officials to discuss logistical and operational matters, and to receive instructions and strategic guidance.²² Likewise, Haqqani’s connections with wealthy Saudi sheikhs and the Kingdom’s General Intelligence Department led to the infamous “dollar for dollar” campaign, where Saudi Arabia agreed to match all American assistance to the resistance effort.²³

Pakistan and America’s interests in Afghanistan were clear: to support the resistance in order to prevent Soviet expansion in South Asia, a threat to U.S. and Pakistani interests. Yet, Pakistan also wanted to ensure that an Islamic fundamentalist regime replaced a nationalist, or worse, communist regime in Afghanistan to provide a base for Kashmiri militants in the event of a prolonged war with Pakistan’s chief rival, India.²⁴ Pakistan believed that an Islamist Afghanistan would be

sympathetic to their interests and would not seek to undermine a fellow Islamic regime. Saudi Arabia’s interests in supporting the Afghan Mujahedeen were slightly more complicated. At the time, the Saudis were increasingly concerned about regional events that could pose a threat to the stability of the kingdom. The 1979 Iranian Shi’a revolution and the Mecca siege of 1979 stoked fears of a burgeoning revolutionary movement. These events, coupled with similar developments in Egypt, prompted Saudi Arabia to adopt an increasingly interventionist posture to gain favor with friendly radical elements that were challenging the Islamic credentials of the Saudi royal family. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan presented an opportunity for the Saudis to capitalize on and exploit strict Salafi Wahabbist religious elements and to leverage them in their favor by funneling support to hardline Islamists to combat the apostate Soviet regime. The Kingdom’s General Intelligence Department used their close ties with bin Laden and others in Peshawar to funnel support directly to Haqqani and others.²⁵

HAQQANI AND THE TALIBAN REGIME

In November 1994, Mullah Mohammed Omar, the infamous one-eyed cleric and former Mujahedeen fighter seized Kandahar City along with like-minded Taliban (the Persianized plural of the Arabic word for student).²⁶ The Taliban were a military force comprised of Mullah Omar, the self-proclaimed “Emir ul-Momineen” (Commander of the Faithful), madrassa students, refugee camp elders, former Mujahedeen, and those who joined Omar out of ethnic solidarity.²⁷

As the strength of the Taliban grew, so did the ISI’s support for the movement. The ISI provided “cash, military spare parts and training” to ensure that the Taliban stayed close to Pakistan.²⁸ The ISI was convinced by the Taliban to stop supporting the likes of Hekmatyar and others as they posed a threat to the consolidation of Pashtuns throughout southern and eastern Afghanistan—a constituency over which Omar eventually sought to establish control.²⁹ Soon, Omar was receiving funding from Saudi charities and religious ministries, and recruits

from Pakistani madrassas swelled his ranks.³⁰

The Taliban consolidated their gains as they expanded to the west and east from Kandahar throughout 1994 and 1995. They seized Paktia by 1995.³¹ At the time, Jalaluddin Haqqani maintained a substantial power base in Loya-Paktia, largely among the Zadran population. Ever the pragmatic and self-interested commander, Haqqani decided to join the Taliban movement in 1995.³² Some contend that ISI may have influenced Haqqani to join the ranks of the Taliban in order to orient the group towards Pakistani objectives.³³ After joining the Taliban, he commanded Omar's forces on the front lines around Kabul during battles with Ahmed Shah Massoud's Northern Alliance and his ally, Hekmatyar. The Taliban suffered a severe setback in battles outside Kabul and Shindand, Herat in mid-1995. Following their losses, Haqqani and his Taliban allies used a summer lull in fighting to revamp their military campaign. With improved logistics, command and control, and a fresh influx of trained fighters, the Taliban seized Kabul in September 1996 after Massoud's forces withdrew to the Panjshir Valley, north of Kabul near the Hindu Kush Mountains.³⁴

After the Taliban's defeat in the northern city of Mazar-e Sharif in 1997, Omar provided Haqqani with substantial financial aid to recruit fighters.³⁵ Haqqani and Khost Taliban commander Mawlawi Ehsanullah raised a force of 2,000 that was dispatched to Kabul and Kandahar to bolster the Taliban's ranks.³⁶ Yet, this was not without cost to the Taliban. The Kandahari officers in charge of large swaths of recruits alienated Haqqani's fighters, who began to desert their ranks, leaving just 300 after two months.³⁷ Again in 1999 and 2000, tensions between the Taliban and Haqqani-linked tribes and fighters flared, first over the Taliban's ban on children playing games and later, in Paktia, over the continued appointment of Kandaharis to influential positions in the Taliban's government.³⁸

In exchange for his efforts in support of the Taliban's campaign, Omar rewarded Haqqani with the post of Minister of Borders and Tribal Affairs following the seizure of Kabul.³⁹ Nevertheless,

Haqqani and others who were not part of Omar's Kandahari core were largely excluded from the Taliban's real decision-making circles in Kandahar City rather than in Kabul.⁴⁰ In fact, early relations between Omar and Haqqani were anything but smooth. Haqqani and Omar are from different Pashtun tribes, the former a Ghilzai and the latter a Durrani. Given Haqqani's role in the defeat of the Soviets, he resented the arrogance of the Kandahari Taliban.⁴¹ According to Maulvi Saadullah, a close friend of Haqqani during the 1990's, "Haqqani favored an Islamic republic," rather than the Islamic emirate that the Taliban were pursuing.⁴² Relations worsened following the Taliban defeat in Mazar-e Sharif in 1997 by Massoud's Northern Alliance fighters. Regardless, Haqqani remained loyal to Omar while maintaining an independent power base in Miram Shah.

THE NEXT GENERATION: SIRAJ HAQQANI

Jalaluddin Haqqani's advanced age and rumors of ill health prevented him from maintaining a hands-on role in the direction and management of the Haqqani network. After the reconstitution of the network following the U.S. invasion in October of 2001, Jalaluddin's leadership role has steadily decreased. Today, the network is led by Jalaluddin's son, Sirajuddin Haqqani, while Siraj's brother, Badruddin Haqqani is the group's senior military commander.⁴³

As a child, Siraj was described as someone who was more concerned with his own appearance than his father's military prowess.⁴⁴ A retired ISI officer with intimate knowledge of the family said of Siraj, "the child didn't take to war."⁴⁵ He is believed to have been born in 1979 rather than in 1973 as many maintain, making him thirty-one years old.⁴⁶ He grew up in Miram Shah and attended his father's seminary there.⁴⁷ According to those who knew the family during the 1990s, Siraj used to complain about the Taliban to his father, calling them "heavy-handed" and "dogmatic."⁴⁸ It was not until his early teens that Siraj began taking an interest in his father's affairs.⁴⁹

In the days after September 11, 2001, Siraj



PHOTO 2 | SIRAJ HAQQANI'S WANTED POSTER

Haqqani stated that he sent his wife and children across the border while his father, brother, and other family members fled to a refugee camp in Mansehra, Pakistan.⁵⁰ Despite Siraj's statements, it is most likely that the entire Haqqani clan fled to Miram Shah where they would have been under the protection of ISI.

Siraj stated that he was living in Peshawar when the Taliban's defense minister Mullah Obaidullah came to see him in 2003.⁵¹ Obaidullah reportedly solicited Haqqani's help in reconstituting a resistance network in the Southeast.⁵² Shortly thereafter, Siraj claimed that Arab and Iraqi fighters visited his facilities, transferring Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and suicide-bomber technology and tactics.⁵³ It was the Haqqanis (referring to the network) who adopted the use of suicide bombers for attacks in Afghanistan.⁵⁴

By mid-2005, it was reported that Siraj Haqqani was spearheading the insurgency in Loya-Paktia. Muallim Mohammad Zaman was named as Siraj's

deputy, while Adul Lais al-Jazairi was responsible for marshalling Arabs in Loya-Paktia.⁵⁵ Siraj allegedly won over Jalaluddin's sons born to his Zadrani wife, including Nasir Ahmad and Ibrahim, who view him as the unchallenged leader of the network.⁵⁶ Although the exact reason for their decision to recognize Siraj is unknown, his Arab lineage may have been preferred given the network's increasingly influential role amongst foreign militants in North Waziristan.

Siraj Haqqani conceives of himself as a *khalifa*, a title for a Muslim leader who follows the principles of Islamic law.⁵⁷ This is telling of his transformation since the 1990s. An apparent religious awakening and close contact with radicalized Arabs such as al-Qaeda may explain this transformation.⁵⁸ It is said that Siraj now sees himself in "grandiose religious terms."⁵⁹ Unlike his father Jalaluddin, Siraj has grown up interacting with foreign Islamic extremists in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Dubai, where his Arab mother reportedly lives. U.S. intelligence officials describe Siraj as "a lot more worldly than his father... not content with his father's methods."⁶⁰ This may include an aversion to any sort of political settlement, as he and his younger cadre have no experience in politics.⁶¹ For this reason, the ISI likely sees the Haqqani network as their most reliable Afghan proxy.⁶²

U.S. intelligence officials are keenly aware of Siraj's rise and current role in today's insurgency. In the fall of 2007, there was a \$50,000 reward for his capture—today it is five million.⁶³ He is described by those who know him as "friendly, polite and simple, is a good listener, answers directly and has a computer-like memory... he is wise beyond his years."⁶⁴

Despite this, Siraj is not as respected amongst the Loya-Paktia populace as is his father.⁶⁵ Jalaluddin is respected as an authentic Mujahedeen fighter, whereas his son is seen as inauthentic in many respects.⁶⁶ His father aided the people of Loya-Paktia by providing security and resources in a way that Siraj has not. Siraj's control of Loya-Paktia is primarily through his military strength and manipulation of local grievances over ineffectual or absent local governance and civilian casualties.

Often, local participation in the network's activities occurs through a dialogue or negotiation between insurgent commanders and the population.⁶⁷ Haqqani fighters, for example, may agree not to interfere in the local timber and pine-nut trade or allow for local children to go to school in exchange for the ability to operate freely in a given area.⁶⁸ The Haqqanis have also been known to provide substantial monetary compensation in exchange for assistance by the local population.

Although the Haqqanis maintain private autonomy, they publically convey subservience to Omar. Jalaluddin and Siraj willingly and repeatedly pledge allegiance to Mullah Omar as Emir-ul-Momineen (Leader of the Faithful).⁶⁹ In fact, in a recent interview, Siraj denied the very existence of the Haqqani network, explaining that it is a term used by the enemies to divide the solidarity of the resistance movement.⁷⁰ Tying their efforts in with the internationally respected and recognized Mullah Omar affords the Haqqanis more power and influence in their own area of operations in addition to broadcasting, albeit falsely, a cohesive, unified resistance movement. For now, the Haqqani network and Omar's objectives align. Haqqani seeks to consolidate his control in Loya-Paktia while further expanding towards Kabul. Without Haqqani, it is unlikely that the Taliban could sustain an effective nationwide resistance movement.

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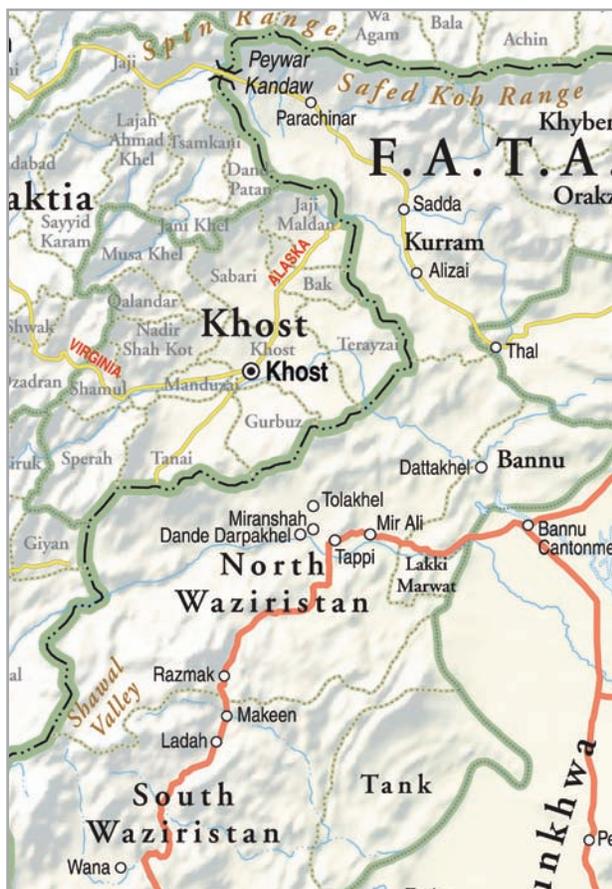
THE HAQQANI NETWORK IN PAKISTAN

The Haqqani network maintains its main command and control, training, and logistical node in and around Miram Shah, the largest town in Pakistan's NWA. The population of NWA increased fifty-one percent from 1981 to 1998, and numbers more than 360,000 today.⁷¹ From Miram Shah, the Haqqanis run a parallel administration that includes courts, recruiting centers, tax offices, and security forces.⁷² The network's funding is comprised of donations

from Arab and Gulf states, al-Qaeda assistance, taxation both in Miram Shah and Loya-Paktia, and payments from Afghan and foreign construction and contracting firms in Loya-Paktia.⁷³ For example, contractors and district elders in Loya-Paktia pay protection money to Haqqani affiliates, sometimes as much as half the money received for reconstruction and development projects.⁷⁴ The Haqqanis also earn revenue from criminal enterprises such as chromite and timber smuggling and, to a lesser extent, kidnapping and extortion.⁷⁵ Several of Jalaluddin Haqqani's sons born to his Arab wife are based in the Gulf to assist with fundraising.⁷⁶

Miram Shah is centrally located within NWA, nestled in a flat valley surrounded by mountains. It is home to the Miram Shah Shura, which is comprised of the network's senior leadership including family members and others such as Bakhti Jan, Siraj's deputy commander, and Siraj's political deputy, Jan Baz Zadran.⁷⁷ Other members of the Shura include the network's Afghan commanders, such as Nai Arsallah, Maulbi Noor Kasim, Muhammad Amin, Mira Jan and Bahram Jan in addition to senior Pakistani commander Darim Sedgai.⁷⁸ Siraj's most trusted and capable Afghan military commander is believed to be Maulvi Sangeen, who spends the majority of his time in Pakistan and is generally disliked by the population of Loya-Paktia.⁷⁹

The area has historically been of great importance for Afghan militants, located just ten miles south of Khost province and thirty miles east of Paktika. During the anti-Soviet jihad, Miram Shah and the surrounding areas served as a rear base of operations for the Mujahedeen. Militants use a series of bunkers and compounds adjacent to the Afghan border to funnel men and materiel into the fight in Afghanistan's southeast.⁸⁰ Miram Shah is also host to the influential Eidak tribe of North Waziristan, which provides as much as eighty-five percent of its youth to the jihadist movement.⁸¹



MAP 2 | KHOST & NORTH WAZIRISTAN

Although the Utmanzai Wazir and the Dawar are the main tribes in the area, there are also substantial portions of Kharsins, Siadgis, Gurbaz and Malakshi Mehsuds.⁸² Today, Miram Shah is the headquarters of the Haqqani network, which plays host to a myriad of al-Qaeda and associated foreign terrorist groups that seek to attack the United States at home and abroad, and to target coalition forces and the government of Afghanistan.⁸³

The Miram Shah Bazaar camp, two compounds in the villages of Sarai Darpa Khel and Danday Darpa Khel, and likely others, constitute the Haqqanis' operational base.⁸⁴ Miram Shah consists of "multiple training camps and safe houses used by al-Qaeda leaders and operatives as well as by Taliban foot soldiers preparing to fight in Afghanistan."⁸⁵ In March 2010, a senior al-Qaeda commander involved in the December 2009 attack on a CIA base in Khost was killed in a drone strike in Miram Shah.⁸⁶ The Haqqanis maintain a fighting force of Afghan and foreign militants. According to

a former Haqqani commander, "the majority of Haqqani fighters are young... their fathers fought for Haqqani during the Russian jihad."⁸⁷

The kidnapping of *New York Times* journalist David Rhode in November 2008 sheds light on the Haqqani network's operations. Rhode was kidnapped by Haqqani-affiliated militants in Afghanistan's Logar province, but was quickly transferred, or more likely, sold to the Haqqani network in Miram Shah.⁸⁸ Rhode and his two Afghan companions spent several months in Miram Shah under the direct authority of Badruddin Haqqani, half-brother of Siraj.⁸⁹

During the course of Rhode's kidnapping, he described a particularly vivid account of the Haqqani network's freedom of movement in North Waziristan. At one point, Badruddin exited the car carrying a kidnapped Rhode in broad daylight as a Pakistani Army convoy passed. Badruddin described how "under a [2006] cease-fire agreement between

the Taliban [(a catch-all term for militants)] and the army, all civilians were required to get out of their cars when an army convoy approached. For Taliban vehicles, through, only the driver had to get out.” This allowed kidnapping victims and foreign militants to remain safely inside Taliban vehicles.⁹⁰ Rhode also described Haqqani commanders and foreign militants walking openly through the bazaars of Miram Shah and other towns.⁹¹

Until recent drone strikes destroyed much of the complex, the centerpiece of the Haqqani network was the Manba-ul-Ulum Madrassa in Dande Darpakhel, near Miram Shah. Other Haqqani-linked schools in NWA include: the Dergey Manday Madrassa; the Khalifa Islami Madrassa; the Gulsha Madrassa; the Abu Shoaib Madrassa; the Darul Uloom Faredia Gulshan-I-Ilum Madrassa, which was destroyed in 2006; the Ziul Aloom Madrassa in Dattakhel; and the Anwarul Uloom Islamia

seminary in Mir Ali.⁹² Haqqani built the Manba-ul-Ulum Madrassa and mosque complex in the 1980s. Following the Soviet invasion, Jalaluddin Haqqani personally conducted hundreds of classes for students who would graduate and go on to fight in Afghanistan.⁹³ Following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the Manba-ul-Ulum Madrassa complex served as a meeting place for Haqqani’s reconstitution of his network until it was closed by the Pakistani government in 2002 for unknown reasons.⁹⁴ Yet, the closure of Manba-ul-Ulum did not last long.

Pakistani security forces launched a small-scale operation in North Waziristan targeting al-Qaeda militants in late 2005. The operation captured Jalaluddin Haqqani’s driver near Miram Shah and led to a comprehensive search of the Haqqanis’ Manba-ul-Ulum complex, which by then had been reopened.⁹⁵ During the search, Pakistani

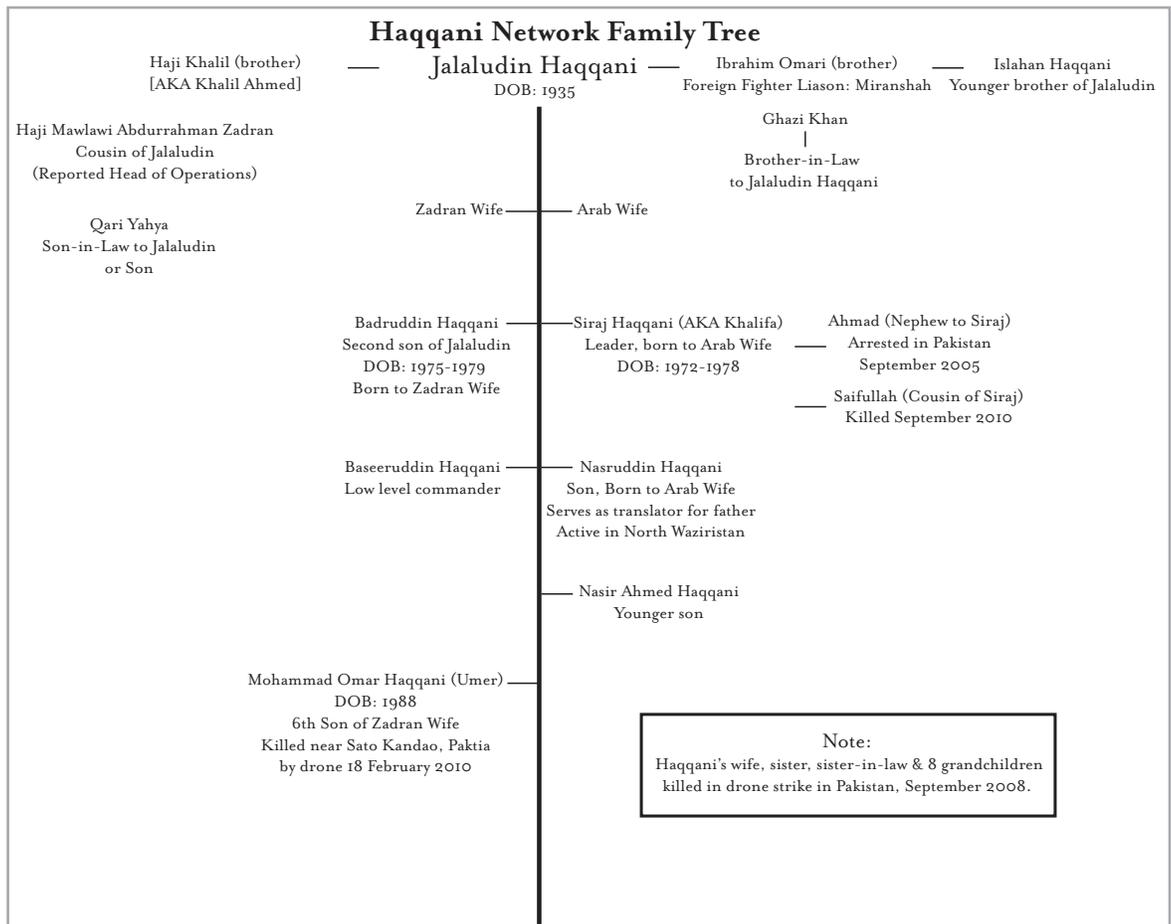


FIGURE 1 | HAQQANI NETWORK FAMILY TREE

forces recovered nearly eighteen truckloads of ammunition and arrested twenty-eight suspected militants.⁹⁶ Since then, the complex has been the targeted six times since September 2008 alone.⁹⁷

The Haqqanis are now said to be keeping a lower profile in NWA, largely due to increased drone strikes and the proximity of large numbers of deployed Pakistani security forces to the south and north. In the past, ISI would reportedly warn Siraj of an impending drone strike, after which he would seek shelter in the mountains surrounding Miram Shah.⁹⁸ This arrangement most likely continues to this day; and, unlike his father's experience in the 1980s, Siraj maintains a low profile when in Miram Shah due to the increased drone threat.⁹⁹

Outside of their main stronghold, the Haqqanis maintain influence in several towns immediately surrounding Miram Shah, such as Tappi, Tolakhel, and Khata Kali. They are also influential in the territory straddling Pakistan's border with Paktika, Khost and Paktia provinces in Afghanistan, including the town of Makeen in South Waziristan.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the Kowchun Valley where Paktika, Khost, and the Pakistan border meet is a notorious infiltration route for Haqqani network militants.¹⁰¹

FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Foreign fighters play a significant role in the Haqqani network. Haqqani network fighters have facilitated the entry of foreign militants into Afghanistan from Pakistan in substantial numbers, beginning in 2007.¹⁰² Throughout 2008 and 2009, the Haqqani network increasingly took advantage of Paktika's mountainous terrain, its proximity to its North Waziristan strongholds, and the absence of a pronounced Afghan or coalition presence to establish support infrastructure and camps.¹⁰³ Fighters and commanders from these groups have long used the Zadran Arc along the Khost-Paktia border and the Khost-Gardez (KG) pass which runs through it for transiting towards Kabul to conduct attacks.¹⁰⁴ Regardless of nationality or affiliation, foreign fighters operate within the structure and organization of the Haqqani network. Although al-Qaeda and other extremist organizations provide training, expertise, personnel and financial

assistance, they are "outsiders" and could not operate in Loya-Paktia and the surrounding areas without the protection of the Haqqanis.¹⁰⁵ Several al-Qaeda commanders have been killed or captured in these areas by ISAF, particularly in southwestern Khost.¹⁰⁶

Militants from Pakistan often maneuvered around Pakistani border posts and entered southern Khost through the Kowchun Valley.¹⁰⁷ Militants were known to have operated out of makeshift training camps in Sperah and Musa Khel of southwestern Khost and to the south in Paktika.¹⁰⁸ Militants also used the mountainous terrain and well-established lines of communication in northeastern Paktika, through which they could move virtually undetected north into southern Paktia and use the K-G road to transit north or south to central Khost.¹⁰⁹ Militants were also known to enter Loya-Paktia from Parachinar in Pakistan's Kurram Agency; the Khost border; and southern Paktika through Wor Mamay and Gomal.¹¹⁰

Foreign fighters include but are not limited to: Arabs, Pakistanis (Wazirs, Dawar, Mehsuds, Balochs, and Punjabis), Uzbeks, Chechens, and Turks. They belong to such groups as al-Qaeda; the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU); its offshoot, the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU); Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP); and *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (LeT), among others.¹¹¹ Most foreign fighters are unfamiliar with their surroundings and are considered outsiders to locals in these remote areas. They require local guides or facilitators to aid them in everything they require, including transportation, weapons, supplies and shelter. These foreign fighter facilitators are an integral aspect of the Haqqani network, according to Siraj himself.¹¹² Often times, these individuals have knowledge of and access to weapons caches, finances, accommodations, and other supplies that foreign fighters require.¹¹³ These facilitators also serve as liaisons between local, indigenous fighters and their foreign counterparts.¹¹⁴

The Haqqanis' relationship with al-Qaeda has also provided the network with access to a new pool of resources. Al-Qaeda's growing ties with Kashmiri extremist groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)

and LeT is particularly troubling.¹¹⁵ Though these groups began sending fighters and resources into Afghanistan since at least 2006, their connections with al-Qaeda have only increased since then.¹¹⁶ In 2009, a British parliamentary committee concluded that al-Qaeda and LeT had reached a “merge point” and were coordinating their activities closely, having “aligned themselves in practice and operationally with the goals of al-Qaeda and the global Islamic jihad.”¹¹⁷ LeT militants were linked with attacks in Loya-Paktia and the attack on the Indian embassy in Kabul during the summer of 2008, in which the driver of the suicide vehicle borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED) was a known member of LeT.¹¹⁸ It is believed that LeT militants, often identified as Punjabi Taliban, are primarily operating out of the Northwest Frontier Province in Pakistan but maintain an established presence in North Waziristan under the protection of Hafiz Gul Bahadur and the Haqqani network.¹¹⁹ As long as the Pakistani government continues to support LeT, the group’s co-location with the Haqqanis provides additional disincentives for a military incursion into North Waziristan.

The Haqqani network has been able to maximize its links with foreign jihadists in NWA, reaping the benefits of foreign fighters, money, and facilitation.¹²⁰ Foreign fighters cohabit with the Haqqani network in and around Miram Shah.¹²¹ The network’s ability to execute spectacular attacks in Kabul and the ensuing international press coverage further reinforces foreigner’s patronage of the Haqqani network. Suicide bombers are a hallmark of the Haqqani network.

Punjabi extremist groups such as Sipah-e-Sahaba and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) are also known to maintain operations in the Haqqani stronghold of North Waziristan.¹²² Sipah reportedly controls many of the Sunni madrassas in Pakistan which produce a significant number of potential suicide bombers used by the Haqqani network and others for attacks in Afghanistan.¹²³

The implications of the Haqqanis’ relationship with this cadre of foreign fighters are profound. It is through the Haqqani network that these terrorist groups execute attacks against the international

community, whom they view as a common enemy. Groups like LeT, TTP and al-Qaeda have all expressed interest and have demonstrated their intent to strike Western targets in Afghanistan, the United States, and Europe. As the Haqqanis work to increase their ability to execute spectacular attacks in Afghanistan, these groups have come to rely on the network to build their own international jihadist credentials. Increasingly, these groups have sought to capitalize on the prospects of defeating the Western forces in Afghanistan. Not only would such an outcome embolden the Haqqanis, al-Qaeda, and its Pakistani affiliates, but it would boost an international jihadist movement that has been consistently evolving since 2001.

In addition to foreign and Haqqani-linked militants, Hizb-i Islami-Gulbuddin (HiG) and to a lesser extent, Taliban fighters, coordinated out of the Peshawar Shura, the Quetta Shura Taliban’s (QST) eastern leadership council, are active in the area.¹²⁴ Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of HiG, is a former anti-Soviet Mujahedeen commander who is currently active in Afghanistan’s East and North, fielding recruits from Pakistani refugee camps and local tribesmen.¹²⁵ HiG’s areas of influence in the Southeast are predominately non-Zadran areas of Paktika and Paktia, portions of Logar and Ghazni, and even areas of Wardak and Khost although to a much lesser extent.¹²⁶ HiG is operationally distinct from the Taliban and Haqqani; however, HiG and Haqqani fighters have brokered temporary tactical alliances to achieve mutually beneficial goals, such as attacks on Afghan and international forces in Loya-Paktia and the surrounding provinces.¹²⁷ Recently, HiG and Haqqani fighters clashed along the Khost-Paktia border.¹²⁸ This is likely the result of territorial disputes but may also be spurred by HiG’s increasing interest in negotiations with the Afghan government. Since 2005, Hekmatyar has pushed for an increasing political role in Kabul with some success.¹²⁹

THE HAQQANI NETWORK IN AFGHANISTAN

The Haqqani network primarily operates out of Afghanistan’s southeastern provinces in Loya-

Paktia and is capable of projecting influence into the provinces surrounding Kabul, and even the capital city itself. Though there are multiple insurgent groups operating in the Afghanistan, the Haqqani network has proven to be one of the most effective and dangerous enemy groups. Securing the Southeast necessitates a clearer understanding of how the enemy network operates from the Pakistani frontier to Afghanistan’s capital city.

The terrain in Loya-Paktia is mountainous. Nearly seventy-five percent of the areas 2.2 million people earn their living by farming in the valleys.¹³⁰ Elevations can reach as high as 10,000 feet above sea-level. Loya-Paktia shares a 550 kilometer border with Pakistan’s Kurram, North, and South Waziristan agencies, including the well-trafficked Ghulam Khan border crossing in Khost. The capital of Khost province, Khost City, has a population of approximately 600,000 and is the economic hub of Loya-Paktia. There are additional centers of commerce in Sharan, Paktika and Gardez, Paktia.

Khost’s terrain is a mixture of rugged mountains to the North and West and a relatively flat agricultural expanse ringed by the mountains of the Pakistan border. This precise piece of terrain has been labeled the “Khost bowl” and is where the majority of the provinces population lives.

Southeastern Afghanistan also includes the provinces of Ghazni, Wardak, and Logar. The terrain of Ghazni and Wardak is mountainous. Approximately 250 miles of Afghanistan’s main highway runs through the flat expanses in the eastern portions of the provinces.¹³¹ Ghazni, and its northern neighbor Wardak are significant not only because of their proximity to the country’s capital, but because Afghan and coalition forces depend on the highway to move supplies from the capital region to the main effort in the South. Logar province constitutes the southern approach Kabul. From Logar, the Haqqani network has been able to threaten the relative security of the capital, projecting suicide attackers from the Pakistan



MAP 3 | AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN BORDER

border through the southeastern provinces into Kabul.

The U.S. strategy in the Southeast is to separate the population from the enemy and connect them with the Afghan government and security forces. For Afghan, coalition, and U.S. forces, this has meant a focus on the major population and commerce centers in the Southeast, where they have worked to build and protect key infrastructure and foster effective provincial and district-level governance. Yet, this population-centric counterinsurgency strategy focuses too little attention on population centers that the Haqqani network depends on for support. Instead, U.S. forces have relied on interdiction efforts and targeted raids into Haqqani strongholds that, until recently, have achieved few enduring effects.

U.S. forces operate in conjunction with the 203rd Corps of the Afghan National Army, the Afghan Border Police, and the regional, provincial and district Afghan National Police. In April 2008, Colonel Pete Johnson and the 4th Brigade Combat Team of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division took over responsibility for the Southeast from Task Force Fury. Colonel Johnson's Task Force Currahee was comprised of approximately 5,000 soldiers, including three U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), one Czech PRT and assistance from a Turkish-led PRT.¹³² Ghazni province was transitioned to a separate brigade-level task force, Task Force White Eagle in September 2008.¹³³ In March 2009, responsibility for Logar and Wardak was transitioned to the newly arrived 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division.¹³⁴ This allowed Task Force Currahee to concentrate their formerly dispersed forces in Loya-Paktia, an area approximately the size of Maryland.

Paratroopers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry division (Task Force Yukon), led by Colonel Michael Howard, assumed responsibility for Loya-Paktia from Task Force Currahee in March 2009.¹³⁵ In February 2010, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne division (Task Force Rakkasan) relieved Task Force Yukon.¹³⁶ The Iron Rakkasans continue the fight today with an increased focus on denying the Haqqani network safe haven in Loya-Paktia.

TRIBAL DYNAMICS

Loya-Paktia falls within the Pashtun tribal belt that straddles the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, from southern to eastern Afghanistan. Of all the Pashtun tribes, the Zadran, a sub tribe of the Karlanri Pashtuns, are considered to be the fiercest. The Zadran resisted Soviet forces in the 1980s. The majority of Zadrans in Loya-Paktia reside in the Zadran Arc, a nine-district area in the center of Loya-Paktia that spans western Khost, eastern Paktika, and southwestern Paktia.¹³⁷ Today, although the Zadrans are severely fractured, tribal fighters continue to provide significant resources to the Haqqani network.

Tribal dynamics in Loya-Paktia are complex. The Zadrans are not homogenous, nor do they wholly support the Haqqani network. Many Zadran elders who have resisted Haqqani infiltration have been assassinated, leaving elements of the tribe open to exploitation in the absence of effective leadership. There are long-standing feuds amongst the Zadran sub-tribes—mainly between the Supeer and Mezai tribes.¹³⁸ The Haqqanis belong to the Sultan Khel of the Mezai tribe while other influential notables such as Abdul Wali Zadran and his father, Pacha Khan Zadran, belong to the Dary Khel of the Supeer.¹³⁹

The Haqqanis and Pacha Khan have feuded for years over the allegiance of the Zadrans. After the U.S. invasion in 2001, local warlords were used to target al-Qaeda due to insufficient force numbers and an aversion to casualties.¹⁴⁰ In the East, Pacha Khan Zadran and his militia were one such example. Khan helped U.S. forces eliminate Taliban and al-Qaeda elements by providing intelligence for targeted airstrikes; however, in early 2002, it was becoming clear that the Zadran “tended to play up the presence of al-Qaeda and Taliban members in [Paktia],” in order to eliminate political rivals.¹⁴¹ In late January 2002, Pacha Khan was appointed provincial governor of Paktia by Afghan President Hamid Karzai's interim government in Kabul. When Pacha Khan attempted to enter the provincial capital of Gardez, he and his militia of nearly 1,000 fighters were repelled by a rival warlord and fellow Zadran, Haji Saifullah.¹⁴² Pacha Khan retreated to

his stronghold in Khost, where he had influenced the appointment of the new provincial governor who was at odds with the fifty-two-member district council.¹⁴³ Pacha Khan had reportedly been angling for an appointment by Karzai as coordinator for southeastern Afghanistan, giving him control over all of Loya-Paktia.¹⁴⁴

Pacha Khan was, however, becoming a nuisance to many in Khost and Paktia. He had caused so much controversy that the provinces were polarized between those supporting him and those opposing him. Because of this, Pacha Khan's appointment as governor never materialized. Instead, Hakim Taniwal, a sociologist and professor who had been living in Australia since 1979, was appointed Khost governor. In September 2002, Taniwal recruited fighters to drive Pacha Khan and his forces out of Khost district center, pushing them into the rural areas of Khost while Afghan forces reportedly drove his fighters out of Gardez.¹⁴⁵ According to the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, General Dan McNeill, the U.S. military broke off its relationship with Pacha Khan around this same time. Pacha Khan's control was confined to isolated positions along the KG road.¹⁴⁶

In 2003, amidst mounting pressure, Pacha Khan

fled across the border to Miram Shah where he was detained by Pakistani security forces.¹⁴⁷ In early 2004, the Afghan government reportedly secured his release although the details of the matter are not publically known.¹⁴⁸ Karzai agreed to pardon Pacha Khan, who successfully won a seat in Parliament in mid-2005.¹⁴⁹ Today, Pacha Khan's son and brother appear to be among the primary powerbrokers in Loya-Paktia. Abdul Rauf Zadran, son of Pacha Khan, owns Shamshad, a private security company which escorts coalition convoys on the Khost-Gardez highway.¹⁵⁰ Shamshad does not hold an official permit but has allegedly received a temporary permit from governmental officials in Paktia, likely facilitated by his father's political connections.¹⁵¹ Abdul Wali Zadran, brother of Pacha Khan, is the current district governor of Wazi Zadran district in Paktia.

Haqqani maintains influence within the Sultan Khel, but it is unclear to what extent. Although he is a member of the Sultan Khel, he does not command the allegiance of the entire tribe. In fact, Sultan Khel tribal chairmen Miakee Khan stated in Paktia in 2007 that he had received threatening night letters from militants in the area.¹⁵² Although Khan did not refer to Haqqani by name, it is most likely that the Haqqani network was the militant

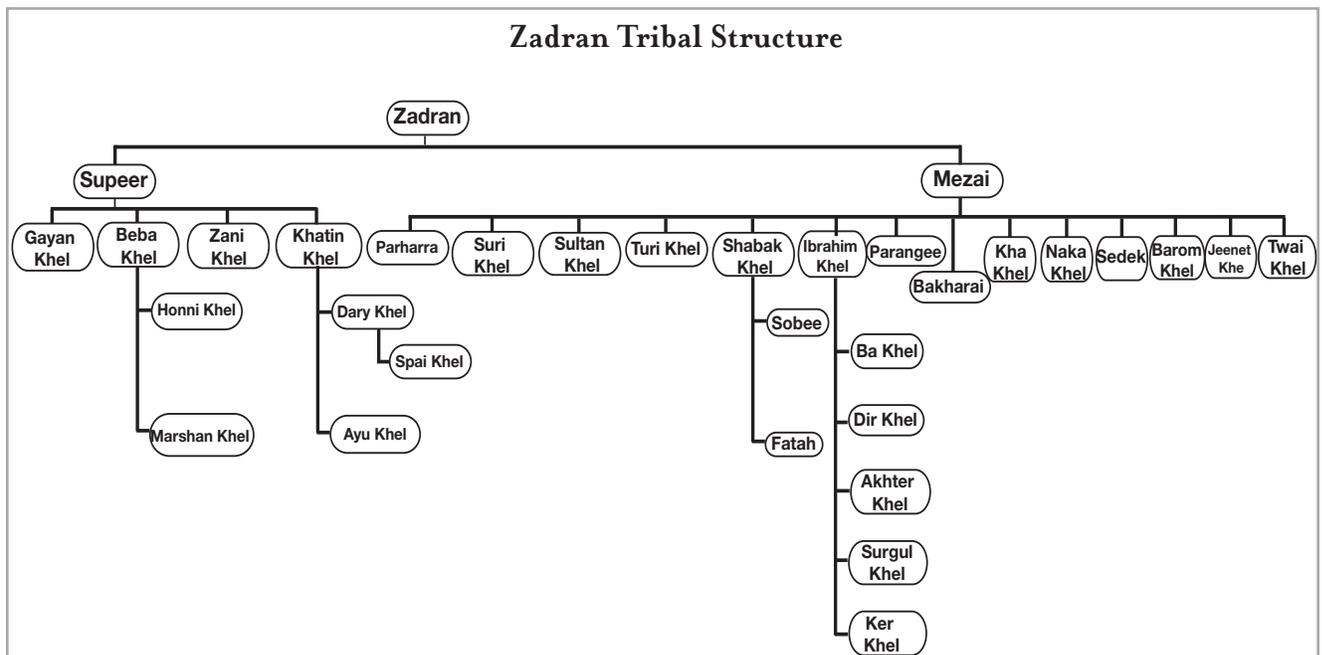


FIGURE 2 | ZADRAN TRIBAL STRUCTURE

group he was referencing. This suggests that at the very least, there are individual tribal leaders that continue to resist Haqqani influence and that the network, in part, relies on violence and intimidation rather than popular support.

Today, the Zadran are particularly aggrieved. The Zadran Arc Stabilization Initiative, which was formulated in mid-2005, promised the Zadran increased security and development in exchange for their support and engagement in stabilizing the Zadran Arc.¹⁵³ Residents were promised employment and pay by the Afghan government and coalition forces, but it did not materialize.¹⁵⁴ Instead, locals were often blamed for these failures.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, the Zadran's association with the Haqqani network undermined the willingness of coalition forces and the Afghan government to have direct and continuous dialogue; this further isolated and alienated large segments of the Zadran arc.¹⁵⁶ Local anger over their perceived mistreatment, along with the assassination of individual tribal leaders, opened the door for large-scale intimidation by the Haqqanis and their local commanders.

Inter-Zadran rifts are not the only tribal conflicts in Loya-Paktia. There are many other tribes and clans with strong ties to the area. The Suleiman Khel are Ghilzai Pashtuns, like many QST, and are most numerous in Zurmat and Gardez.¹⁵⁷ The Kharoti are another clan within the Ghilzai Pashtun umbrella and are rivals with the Suleiman Khel.¹⁵⁸ The Tani are much smaller in number than the Zadran but gained significant influence with the appointment of Hakim Taniwal as governor of Khost and later, Paktia. Although this would have aggrieved the dominant Zadran, the outbreak of large-scale tribal conflict never occurred, likely because the Haqqanis were already at war with the state and could have been considered to represent the larger Zadran cause.

The Mangal and Moqbil tribes, subtribes of the Pashtun Karlanri tribe, also play an important role in Loya-Paktia. Historically, the Mangal have a reputation for independence. This continues to some degree today, although many Mangals are supportive of the Afghan government. In the Sabari district of Khost, the Mangals and the

Sabari tribe have a particularly fierce rivalry. More specifically, the rivalry is between the Zambar sub-tribe of the Sabaris and the Bal Khel sub-tribe of the Mangals.¹⁵⁹ Neither have leadership capable of mitigating the conflict nor do they act together as cohesive units.¹⁶⁰ One interesting development in recent years is the shift in enemy activity. The Zambar dominate areas of northern Sabari that were once heavily influenced by the Haqqani network. Yet, much of the recently reported enemy activity has been that of HiG, primarily in Mangal areas.¹⁶¹ There have even been reports of sporadic clashes between Haqqani and HiG forces.¹⁶² This may be a product of outreach by the Mangals in Sabari to HiG for increased protection from Haqqani-affiliated intimidation and the rising displeasure over civilian casualties by Haqqani-initiated attacks in Mangal territory.

The Mangal have also clashed with other Pashtun tribes. Elsewhere in Loya-Paktia, an argument between the Moqbil and Mangal in Nadir Shah Kot broke out over a land dispute during the summer and fall of 2009.¹⁶³ The Moqbil is a Pashtun tribe found in eastern Paktia along with the Jaji, Tsamkani and nomadic Kuchi tribes.¹⁶⁴ The Moqbil claim to be a Zadran sub-tribe, although many Zadrans dispute this. The Moqbil are particularly important because they straddle the Paktia border with Pakistan, which has been a popular infiltration route for insurgents based on the Pakistani side of the border in and around Parachinar.¹⁶⁵

In this particular dispute, the Mangal invaded Nadir Shah Kot from neighboring Qalandar district and seized Moqbil land.¹⁶⁶ The rival tribes essentially resulted to trench-warfare, as each side dug-in to prevent the other from seizing the land.¹⁶⁷ In order to retake their land, the Moqbil reached out to the U.S. military and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) but ultimately secured the active support of Haqqani-linked commanders, who armed them to defeat the Mangal.¹⁶⁸ Other senior Haqqani commanders mediated between the warring factions, demonstrating their ability to provide a dispute resolution service that the government was unable to provide.¹⁶⁹

In Paktika, the Kharoti and the Waziris dominate

the Pakistan border districts—the Kharoti in Gomal and the Wazir in Bermal.¹⁷⁰ Generally speaking, the Kharoti do not have a history of collaboration with insurgent groups in the area, despite the fact that Hizb-i Islami leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is a Kharoti.¹⁷¹ Just as Haqqani does not command the full allegiance of the Suleiman Khel Zadran's, Hekmatyar does not appear to be all that influential among the Paktika Kharoti. Waziris are also present in the area. The tribe appeared open to establishing a relationship with Afghan and coalition forces during the winter of late 2008 and early 2009. Waziri elders held a shura with coalition forces, the Afghan National Army (ANA), the provincial governor and sub-governor during which they accepted humanitarian aid to take back to their families. Several days later, Haqqani militants decapitated three of the elders and burned their bodies on top of the humanitarian supplies they had accepted to aid their families.¹⁷²

THE HAQQANI NETWORK'S EXPANSION IN AFGHANISTAN

The Haqqanis' strategy in the Southeast is comprised of several lines of effort. First, they seek to force the departure of coalition forces, primarily in their territory of Loya-Paktia, through sustained harassment and persistent attacks aimed at creating an atmosphere of instability. The Haqqani network believes that the international military commitment to Afghanistan is only short-term. Since security is the primary requirement for any governance or development progress, they believe that maintaining an unstable security environment will prevent effective and lasting progress on any and all fronts. Siraj and his father also seek to strengthen their negotiating position ahead of any reconciliation talks to exact as many concessions as possible. The Haqqanis may in fact be angling for de-facto control of the Southeast. Second, the Haqqani network has sought to expand from their historical stronghold of Loya-Paktia into portions of southeastern Ghazni near Highway One and more importantly, into Logar. This has allowed the network to project foreign fighters and suicide bombers into Kabul to launch spectacular assaults. Not only does this increase the network's

standing vis-a-vis Mullah Omar and the QST senior leadership, but it increases the Haqqanis' reputation amongst the international jihadist community in North Waziristan and outside the region. This translates to more money materials, and manpower.

RECONSTITUTING THE NETWORK

Between 2002 and 2004, Jalaluddin Haqqani reconstituted his network in Loya-Paktia and North Waziristan from his headquarters in Miram Shah.¹⁷³ He worked closely with al-Qaeda field commander Abu Zubaydah to establish an insurgent presence in Paktia province.¹⁷⁴ In June 2003, the QST announced the creation of a southeast Shura which included Jalaluddin Haqqani as one of the ten members.¹⁷⁵ Haqqani had already been included in Omar's 2003 and 2004 Rahbari Shura, the main decision-making body of the Quetta Shura Taliban.¹⁷⁶ The following month, Mullah Omar reorganized his command structure into regional commands, designating specific commanders to lead military activities in each region. Jalaluddin Haqqani was named regional commander for the East, an area that included Loya-Paktia.¹⁷⁷ Despite this, Siraj Haqqani admitted that during this time, the Haqqani network lacked an effective, centralized command and control which prevented them from executing any sort of overarching strategic plan.¹⁷⁸

Mullah Omar and the QST needed Haqqani and his influence in Loya-Paktia, an area in which the southern Taliban were never able to gain influence because of a history of strong tribal independence and a fierce aversion to outsiders.¹⁷⁹ The Sultan Khel Zadran's provided sanctuary and a base of operations for the early Haqqani reconstitution in Loya-Paktia from their command and control hub in Miram Shah, North Waziristan. Although the Haqqanis publicly pledge allegiance to Omar and allow their network to be subsumed under the larger QST umbrella organization, this is strategic rather than genuine. The Haqqanis' recognition of Mullah Omar as Emir is a requirement in order to be considered legitimate in the eyes of hard-line Islamic fundamentalists in the region.¹⁸⁰

From their stronghold in the Zadran Arc, the

Haqqani network expanded into the mountainous areas of Paktika, southern and western Paktia through Parachinar positions in neighboring Pakistan.¹⁸¹ By the end of 2003, they had established a presence in approximately ten of twenty-two districts in Paktika, the Zadran arc in Khost, and Paktia using Parachinar positions in neighboring Pakistan.¹⁸² The first significant attack that took place following Omar's appointment of Jalaluddin Haqqani as the regional commander for the east was the storming of Barmal, Paktika district center by 200 militants sent from Haqqani territory in Pakistan—including foreign elements such as Arabic and Urdu speakers.¹⁸³ Foreigners, in addition to Zadran recruits provided the Haqqani network with the military force it needed to penetrate select areas outside of the Zadran Arc. Yet, according to Siraj, the Haqqanis were still in a defensive position in Loya-Paktia.¹⁸⁴

THE HAQQANIS' GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION

The Haqqani network worked to expand control from their already established positions into larger areas of Khost and Paktia beginning in 2005 and continuing throughout 2006. The Haqqanis expansion outside of the Zadran Arc was possible, not only because of military force, but because of two additional factors. The strength of local religious networks over weaker tribal leadership and the ineffectual nature of district governance structures created an opportunity that the Haqqanis could exploit. Conservative clergy were receptive to the Haqqanis not only for their mujahedeen credentials but also because the network openly embraces the traditionalist religious networks and the most radical brand of Islam that is preached in madrassas throughout Loya-Paktia.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, these local conservative religious networks enabled a steady stream of recruits in addition to the foreign militants flowing across the border from the Waziristans.¹⁸⁶ Even areas with a heavy but ineffective government presence presented an opportunity for insurgents to exploit.¹⁸⁷ In part, the expansion was due to the marginalization of tribal maliks (leaders) and the increased role of radical mullahs that were supportive of the Haqqanis' extremist ideology.

Siraj's political deputy and most-trusted associate, Jan Baz Zadran, likely played a large role in devising this coordinated strategy.¹⁸⁸

After the Haqqanis had successfully established a presence in areas of Khost, Paktia, and Paktika, the network began efforts to remove all significant powerbrokers in Loya-Paktia that were barriers to their consolidation of power. For the Haqqani network, their two main rivals were the Zadran leader, Pacha Khan Zadran, and the most effectual Afghan government official at the time, Hakim Taniwal. Pacha Khan Zadran was targeted three times since he became a legislator in 2005. While all three attacks were almost certainly carried out by the Haqqanis, only one instance has been confirmed. In February 2006, a bomb placed on the route Pacha Khan's convoy was expected to travel failed to detonate because his convoy was ahead of schedule.¹⁸⁹ In December 2006, a Haqqani network affiliated suicide bomber detonated near a vehicle of Zadran's in Kabul;¹⁹⁰ however, he was not present at the time of the attack. A suicide bomber drove his motorcycle into Pacha Khan's convoy again in October 2007, but Pacha Khan escaped unharmed.¹⁹¹ The Haqqani network's assassination campaign against Pacha Khan was designed to weaken the organized opposition to the Haqqanis by Pacha Khan's tribe, the Mezai Zadran.

The Haqqani network assassinated Paktia Governor Hakim Taniwal in September 2006. Taniwal had been appointed by Karzai as governor of Khost in late 2002 after replacing Kamal Khan Zadran, the brother of Pacha Khan. He was shifted to a ministerial position in Kabul in 2004, but later returned to Loya-Paktia in late 2006 to serve as governor of Paktia province.¹⁹² Taniwal was assassinated by a suicide bomber believed to be a member of the Haqqani network.¹⁹³ At Taniwal's funeral days later, another bomber sent by Haqqani detonated, killing thirty-nine and injuring four of President Karzai's ministers.¹⁹⁴ Haqqani understood that Taniwal's assassination would result in an inter-tribal power grab that he and his network could exploit.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, attacks against well-protected, high profile figures would discourage educated and qualified individuals from accepting less-protected, lower-level positions in the districts and villages of

Loya-Paktia. Consequently, these positions fell to under-qualified, corrupt individuals willing to risk their personal safety for personal enrichment.¹⁹⁶ In addition to targeting local officials, the Haqqani network sought to expand its control over the local population, largely through intimidation. They also sought to eliminate local criminal elements to create the perception that only they, not the provincial or district government, were capable of establishing order.¹⁹⁷

The Haqqanis cooperate with a group known as the Mansur Network, which operates primarily in the Zurmat district of Paktia, although it is believed their power extends to the capital of Gardez.¹⁹⁸ The network was originally led by the late Mawlawi Nasrullah Mansur. He is survived by two cousins, Latifullah and Bashir Mansur, as well as his three sons, Saifurrahman, Seyyedurrahman and Fathurrahman.¹⁹⁹ The network was instrumental in leading fighters in Operation Anaconda against U.S. forces in 2002. Between 2005 and 2006, his network was instrumental in facilitating an increase in insurgent activity in Loya-Paktia.²⁰⁰ Today, the brother of Nasrullah, Abdullatif is believed to head the network.²⁰¹

The general structure of the Haqqani network is largely hierarchical.²⁰² While the overall enemy network in the Southeast is primarily directed and resourced by the Haqqani network, there were elements of HiG and the QST that were loosely cooperating, if not loosely incorporated, into that structure. The most senior commanders (Tier 1) belong to the Haqqani network and are located in Pakistan's North Waziristan Agency. These individuals issue strategic-level guidance and direct financial matters for the southeastern insurgency. Senior commanders (Tier 2) that operate on the ground in the Southeast are Haqqani commanders with familial ties to the area. Many of these familial connections are to former respected Mujahedeen fighters or influential members of the community. The familial ties provide legitimacy and intimate knowledge of the terrain and informal social structures that are exploited by the insurgency. Group leaders (Tier 3) are locally based and serve as conduits for foreign fighters, also helping Tier 2 insurgents recruit from the local populous. Their local knowledge is invaluable and their consistent

presence facilitates a solid understanding of Afghan and coalition operations in the area. Often times, Tier 3 group leaders operate largely by rounding up fighters and soliciting money and resources to go execute a mission.²⁰³ Core fighters (Tier 4) represent the hard-core fighting force, essentially on retainer for Tier 2 and Tier 3 commanders. Cash fighters (Tier 5) are often non-ideological individuals hired for specific engagements. Most often, these individuals are youths or seasonal workers trying to support themselves or their families. Tier 5 fighters are directed by Tier 4 fighters or Tier 3 commanders often under the indirect supervision of Tier 2 commanders.

The Haqqani network relies on locally-recruited tribesmen to conduct the majority of the network's attacks in Loya-Paktia. Foreign fighters are primarily used for the financing and training Haqqani recruits, and in some cases, for the execution of spectacular attacks in Kabul under the direction of the Haqqani network. The majority of local recruits come from the Zadran Arc.²⁰⁴ Often times, local tribal leaders are required to provide a quota of men to conduct attacks.²⁰⁵ In other cases, individuals are hired to execute a specific attack, which is coordinated by a more senior Haqqani commander. The poor economic situation in the Zadran arc has aided in Haqqani recruiting.²⁰⁶ Haqqani commanders also recruit from outside the Zadran arc, in areas throughout Khost, Paktika, Paktia, Logar and possibly Ghazni as well. These recruits are often paid fighters recruited by Haqqani commanders to whom they have familial connections, giving the network access to sizable populations outside of the Zadran strongholds.²⁰⁷

The Haqqani network has established numerous compounds and complexes to shelter and equip militants making the trip from Pakistan to Afghanistan. In Paktika, two such incidents highlight the role of these establishments. In the mountainous region of Wor Mamay in southern Paktika, coalition forces raided the heavily fortified compound of Maulvi Sangeen, a well-known, senior commander in the Haqqani network.²⁰⁸ Nearly forty militants were reportedly using the compound. Six suicide bombers blew themselves up during the raid.²⁰⁹ A search of the compound

netted four vehicles, twenty-seven motorcycles, and munitions.²¹⁰ In Orgun district in northeastern Paktika, a coalition raid discovered and destroyed a complex of bunkers, weapons and other structures used by the Haqqani network as a logistics base and safe haven for foreign fighters.²¹¹ In Paktia, ANP and special operations forces discovered an insurgent base camp in Jani Kheyl district. The camp was believed to be used for the facilitation of fighters from Pakistan into Loya-Paktia.²¹² The site was concealed by thick foliage and included a commander’s sleeping and living quarters as well as a dozen tree huts for sheltering additional militants. Afghan and U.S forces estimated the camp was resourced to supply fifty to sixty enemy fighters for a prolonged period.

The establishment of these compounds provides distinct advantages. They serve as a rear base for training and shelter and are the first rallying point for foreign fighters entering Afghanistan from Pakistan. Not only do these isolated camps allow for additional training in technical skills required

to execute successful attacks, they also present the network with an opportunity to reinforce orthodoxy and ideological rhetoric, a necessity to ensure that these individuals are capable of carrying out suicide missions.

Much like the QST’s operations in southern Afghanistan, the Haqqani network maintains a sophisticated IED network. Limiting freedom of movement meant establishing effective IED and SVBIED networks in districts that Afghan and coalition forces were focused on or had to transit through.²¹³ In April 2009, Siraj Haqqani told an MSNBC interviewer that his network had “acquired the modern technology that we were lacking and we have mastered new and innovative methods of making bombs and explosives.”²¹⁴ Throughout Loya-Paktia, the Haqqani network maintains a host of IED cells which are responsible for the facilitation, construction, emplacement, and detonation of IEDs in a given area.²¹⁵

The majority of IED materials are brought in from neighboring Pakistan on roads via truck. The sheer quantity of trucks transiting into Afghanistan makes it difficult to prevent. The number of IED attacks increased rapidly in 2009.²¹⁶ The most interesting detail regarding IED attacks in Loya-Paktia is that they contain potassium chlorate, rather than ammonium nitrate which is found in IEDs throughout the rest of the country.²¹⁷ Potassium chlorate is used in the match, paper, and fireworks industry mainly found in and around North Waziristan, particularly in Miram Shah.²¹⁸

The financing of the Haqqani network’s operations differs slightly from that of the QST to the South. The network maintains a diverse funding stream from a variety of sources. Unlike the QST to the south, the majority of the Haqqanis’ funding does not come from the narcotics trade although smuggling of opium and marijuana has been reported.²¹⁹ Instead, precious stone and, to a lesser extent, chromite smuggling, is rife in Paktia and Khost.²²⁰ In Paktia alone, forty smugglers with twenty-nine truckloads of precious stones were detained in the province in 2008.²²¹ The Haqqanis’ involvement in the smuggling of timber from the mountains of northern Khost and southern Paktia

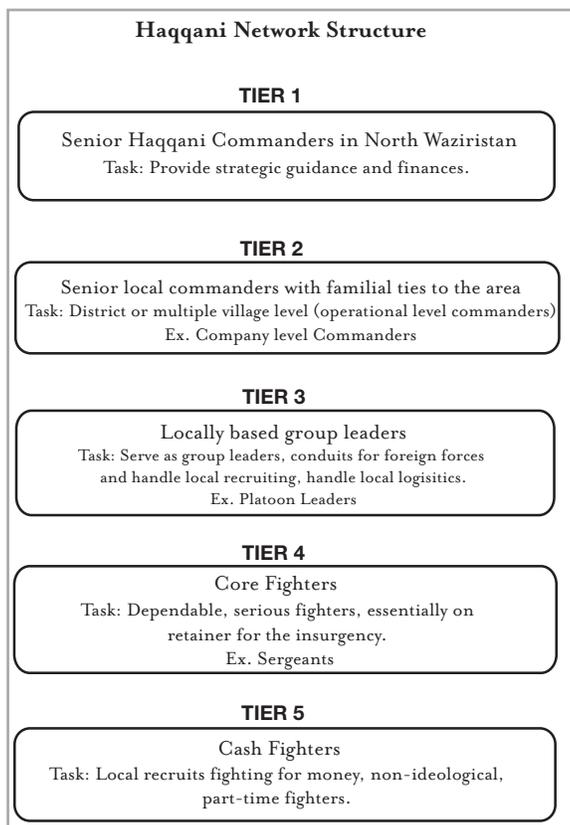
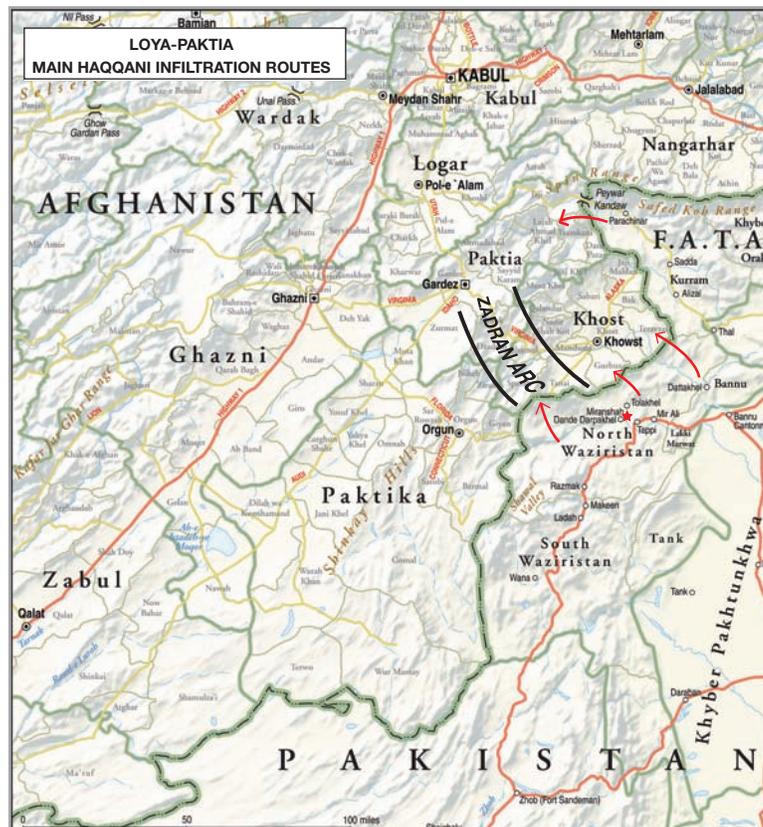


FIGURE 3 | HAQQANI NETWORK STRUCTURE

has also proved lucrative. They use profits from the illicit smuggling of timber from southeastern Afghanistan into Pakistan to fund their activities in the area.²²² Kidnapping of government officials, Afghan security forces, foreign aid workers, U.S. soldiers, and journalists is also a lucrative source of income for the network.²²³ A sizable portion of the Haqqanis' income comes from the extortion of local and foreign construction firms working on infrastructure and reconstruction projects in Loya-Paktia.²²⁴ The network reportedly also maintains a taxation network in the Zadrán Arc and possibly other areas of influence—primarily in areas where they maintain the military strength to enforce collection.²²⁵ Yet, the majority of the Haqqanis' funding is believed to come from wealthy foreign donors, usually from the Gulf states.²²⁶

In the spring and early summer of 2008, Haqqani-led kinetic activity in Afghanistan sharply increased. The Haqqani network's expansion was aided by the reinstatement of a peace deal between Maulvi Nazir

and Baitullah Mehsud and, separately, a peace agreement between each group and the Pakistani government in late February of 2008.²²⁷ The Haqqani network played a role in brokering both peace deals.²²⁸ Rather than fighting each other or in Baitullah's case, fighting the Pakistani government, each group directed more of their resources towards Afghanistan.²²⁹ Throughout the summer, Loya-Paktia witnessed a significant amount of cross-border activity, especially in Khost and Paktika. In June and July 2008, large groups of fighters crossing into Paktika launched attacks on border outposts while mortar teams from Pakistan targeted Khost border outposts.²³⁰ Many of those who were killed in the fighting were identified as Wazir and Punjab fighters.²³¹ Additionally, eighteen members of al-Qaeda were captured in Paktia during this time. Afghan intelligence officials reported that the individuals infiltrated Afghanistan from Waziristan and were headed back to Miram Shah when they were apprehended.²³² Attacks in Paktika alone



MAP 4 | LOYA-PAKTIA INFILTRATION ROUTES

increased over twenty percent in the summer of 2008 as compared to 2007 levels.²³³

THE HAQQANI OFFENSIVE

Throughout 2008 and 2009, the Haqqani network solidified firm bases of support in southern Khost, including the northern district of Sabari in eastern Paktika and portions of southwestern Paktia. Haqqani attacks against Afghan government installations such as district centers demonstrated an increased sophistication and lethality during this time. Paktia and Khost were primary targets for district center attacks.²³⁴ In Paktia, attacks were launched on the Shawak district center once and the Zadrán district center three times in a six-month span from April to September 2008.²³⁵ In all four incidents, militants overran the district centers, damaging government buildings and vehicles with explosives and rocket fire. Yet, militants had no intention of staying and fighting Afghan and coalition forces as they attempted to retake the district centers—they often withdrew as quickly as they came.

In 2008, militants in Khost only attempted to overrun Sperah and Qalandar district centers. In Sperah, Afghan officials reported over one hundred militants involved in the attempted seizure of the district center.²³⁶ Although the attack was repelled by Afghan forces and coalition airpower, it was a particularly brazen attempt and demonstrated the Haqqani network's ability to mobilize a large number of fighters to control the administrative centers of the districts.

The Haqqani network also focused on restricting the movement of Afghan and coalition forces, both through the use of IEDs and by targeting the construction of transportation infrastructure. Haqqani fighters have primarily targeted road construction projects which, if completed, would provide greater freedom of movement for Afghan and coalition forces. In mid-2008, militants in Paktia announced that they had banned reconstruction of a road in Zurmat, Paktia. Militant spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed, "the construction of the road was hindering our activities and it had no benefits for civilians but

it was important and useful for foreign troops to achieve their goals in the area."²³⁷ Haqqani banned road construction in Zurmat, Paktia in May 2008 and militants distributed *shabname* or night letters to further intimidate civilians and local officials.²³⁸

More than any other target, the KG road was the primary focus of the Afghan government, U.S. forces, and the Haqqani network.²³⁹ According to the Afghan Government, when completed the road will reduce "both time and cost of travel from Khost to Kabul by four hours... facilitate transport of surplus food from Khost to areas in Afghanistan where there are food deficits, facilitate agricultural exports from Khost... increase international trade through access to Pakistan's nearby railhead, which will provide a shorter, alternative route for freight to Kabul and relieve freight traffic on the Turkum Gate-Jalalabad-Kabul route."²⁴⁰ The project was initially scheduled to be completed in 2009; however, it is likely to continue through 2010 and possibly into 2011. To blunt the Haqqani offensive, Afghan forces conducted relatively successful disruption operations as part of Operation Radubarq in the areas surrounding the KG road.²⁴¹

As the number of construction projects increased in 2009, so too did Haqqani network attacks.²⁴² In Loya-Paktia alone, there were at least fifteen incidents of Haqqani militants targeting private and foreign construction firm's security guards, hired to protect laborers.²⁴³ Afghan guards for Indian construction companies have been singled-out for attacks by the Haqqani network, resulting in at least three known attacks in 2009.²⁴⁴

The resignation of Khost Provincial Governor Arsala Jamal in November of 2008 further contributed to the destabilization of the province.²⁴⁵ Jamal is a close associate of President Karzai and maintained an effective working relationship with the PRT. Although the situation in Khost had worsened, Jamal's resignation created a leadership vacuum that the Haqqani network was well-poised to fill. During his two years as Governor, Haqqani militants attempted to assassinate Jamal on four separate occasions.²⁴⁶ Following his resignation, Jamal and his family fled the province. Jamal currently serves as a cultural advisor to Ambassador Holbrooke in Kabul.

In late 2008, the Haqqani network's tactical proficiency appeared to have improved, possibly as a result of specialized training by al-Qaeda and Pakistani militant groups such as the TTP and Maulvi Nazir, resulting in several complex assaults and isolated suicide attacks.²⁴⁷ In early May 2009, Haqqani fighters staged a complex, multi-staged attack on the Khost City provincial governor's compound, the police headquarters building, and a nearby administrative building.²⁴⁸ The city is the economic center of the province, the headquarters of the provinces administrative apparatus and the headquarters of the coalition's presence in the province. Haqqani fighters attempted to breach compound exteriors by detonating a suicide bomber at the main entrance point in order to facilitate the entry of additional suicide bombers. Multiple suicide attackers attempted to enter the police headquarters building, but they were repelled and took twenty hostages in a nearby municipal building.²⁴⁹ The hostages were subsequently rescued by U.S. forces, when additional suicide attackers inside the building detonated.²⁵⁰ As more forces attempted to respond to the incident, Haqqani fighters used IEDs and ambushes along frequently traversed routes.²⁵¹ This was the most sophisticated, tactically proficient attack to date in the province.

In January 2009, Hamidullah Qalandarzai was appointed as Jamal's replacement—despite the pleadings of a jirga of Khost elders who lobbied Karzai to appoint Mohammad Taher Sabri as the next governor.²⁵² Previously, Qalandarzai served as the Deputy Minister of Administration with the Ministry of Communications in Kabul. His appointment was rumored to have been the result of an agreement between Afghanistan's Finance Minister and President Karzai.²⁵³ He is a member of the Afghan Millat party, a moderate Islamic Pashtun nationalist party supportive of President Karzai's government. His brother Amrullah was recently appointed as the head of customs in Khost City while another brother, Murtaza is the Deputy Governor of Laghman.

In his short stint as governor, his administration has been accused of incompetence by a host of civil society organizations and tribal councils, including the Khost Tribal Solidarity Council (TSC).²⁵⁴ The

TSC was upset with the governor over his inability to resolve a land dispute between the Mangal and Bal Khil tribes. Yet, this was not the only issue with his performance. He allegedly brought his own construction company to Khost and partnered with a local businessman to create an additional company that could benefit from contracts with the PRT and other donors.²⁵⁵

While serving as governor, Qalandarzai conducted most of his activities within his heavily fortified residence in Khost City.²⁵⁶ Rarely did he travel to outlying districts and only then with coalition, not Afghan forces. He has publically voiced his displeasure with ANSF commanders, ministerial officials, and district governors in Khost. His reluctance to travel and engage with the populous did not inspire confidence among the local population. Those who knew him stated that he never wanted to be a provincial governor and that he instead lobbied for a ministerial appointment in Kabul that he never received.²⁵⁷

Qalandarzai was never officially fired as governor. In October 2009, he was called to Kabul and simply never returned. His deputy, Tahir Khan Sabari was appointed as acting governor from November 2009 to April 2010. That month, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) announced Abdul Jabar Naeemi, a technocrat and former governor of Wardak from March 2005 to May 2008, as the official governor for Khost. Naeemi maintains close relations with the head of the Khost TSC, Ghazi Nawaz Tani, as both are members of the Mahazi Mile Party--supporters of the popular Pashtun figurehead Pir Sayed Ahmed Gailani.²⁵⁸ Naeemi also maintains close ties to President Karzai and former Minister of Interior, Hanif Atmar. Naeemi was the Karzai's campaign chairman during his 2004-2005 election bid.

To date, Naeemi appears to enjoy a good working relationship with the tribes of Khost and U.S. forces. Naeemi has signaled that addressing issues of corruption is among his top priorities. He has already removed two governmental officials and ordered the destruction of buildings illegally constructed on government land.²⁵⁹ Naeemi appears to be off to a positive start, although there

is much more that needs to be done to improve the face of governance in Khost.

In the lead-up to the August 2009 presidential elections, Afghan and coalition forces launched Operations Thunder Five in Khost and Champion Sword in Paktia.²⁶⁰ Each was designed to set proper security conditions for the upcoming elections. The insurgency was attempting to derail the upcoming elections through a campaign of intimidation and widespread violence.²⁶¹ In Loya-Paktia, polling stations were burned while night letters were distributed in Khost and Paktia, warning people against voting.²⁶² In part, the insurgent's strategy seems to have been effective. In mid-August, residents of Khost voiced their concerns regarding the worsening security situation in the province.²⁶³

While attacks in Loya-Paktia were minimal during election-day, accusations of fraud and ballot-rigging were widespread.²⁶⁴ Tribal leaders and religious scholars held a gathering in Khost on behalf of the tribes in Loya-Paktia to protest the possibility of quarantining their votes due to accusations of voter fraud.²⁶⁵

Recently, members of the Haqqani network, and elements of HiG have also made increasing efforts to penetrate governance structures.²⁶⁶ Not only have the militants attempted to destroy these organizations from the outside, they may now be trying to destroy them from the inside as well. This new trend is particularly problematic because it gives militants direct access to more resources and intelligence at a time when the partnership between coalition forces and these organizations are at their highest. Network commanders recently abducted and executed elders who were influential village council heads in Khost because they refused to willingly hand over several thousand dollars of grants they received from Afghanistan's National Solidarity program; however this incident was not simply about the money.²⁶⁷ It was primarily geared towards eliminating uncooperative tribal elders who oppose the network while also demonstrating the futility of opposing the network to the remainder of the population.

THE HAQQANI NETWORK IN GHAZNI AND WARDAK

In 2005, Siraj Haqqani was identified as the head of the Taliban's military committee for Ghazni and Logar in addition to Loya-Paktia, officially assuming the responsibilities of commander, although his father may have continued to issue the network's strategic guidance.²⁶⁸ Though it is difficult to determine precisely when the Haqqani network established a foothold in Ghazni, network operatives began showing up in the province in 2005. Foreign fighters, along with al-Qaeda, also began operating in eastern Ghazni during this time, transiting into the area either through old Mujahedeen supply routes in the Shahikot Mountains or from the east through the Zadran Arc.²⁶⁹

It was not until late 2006 and 2007, however, that Taliban and Haqqani-linked fighters expanded their presence in Ghazni, building on the support infrastructure that was established over the previous years.²⁷⁰ They also expanded their support base by eliminating opposition and discouraging local collaboration with district and provincial officials.²⁷¹ In April 2006, Ghazni officials banned the use of motorbikes in Andar and Giro districts. The insurgency responded by banning all automobile traffic. The result was striking and illustrative of the insurgent's control of the countryside. Nearly all cars, trucks and buses disappeared from the roadways.²⁷²

During the latter half of 2007 into 2008, insurgents in Ghazni spread out from their strongholds in the eastern districts of the province into the southern western, and northern districts—with particular focus on controlling Highway 1 and the Ghazni to Sharan, Paktika highway.²⁷³ Insurgents mounted several attempts to overrun district centers in Ajristan and Rashidan which forced Afghan and coalition forces to pull limited resources from critical areas in order to mount a counteroffensive.²⁷⁴

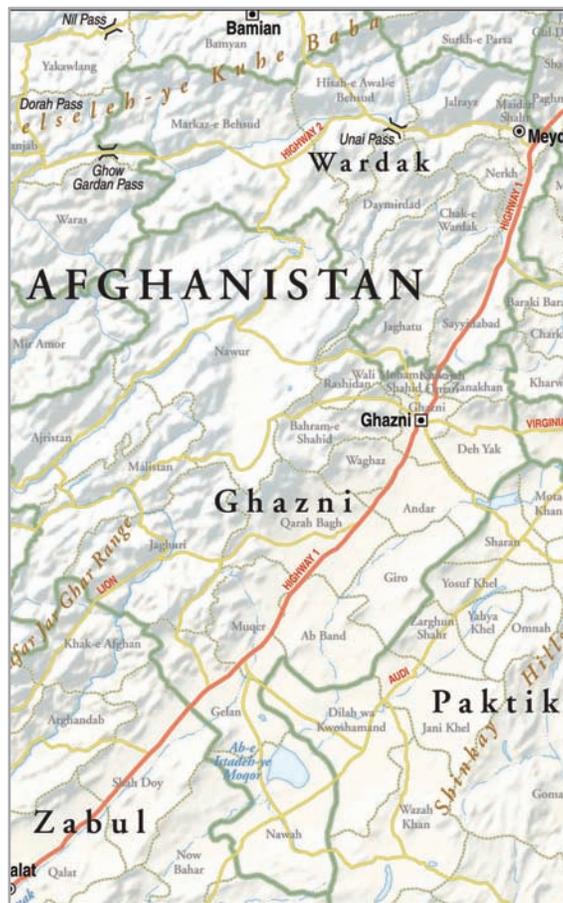
Polish troops, as part of Task Force White Eagle, assumed responsibility for coalition operations in Ghazni in October 2008, moving into four U.S.-built bases.²⁷⁵ Although approximately 150 U.S. soldiers remained in Ghazni, the remainder shifted to neighboring Paktika.²⁷⁶ Primarily, Task Force White Eagle was responsible for maintaining security on Highway One, which cuts through the province, and for training and mentoring ANSF.²⁷⁷ When the Poles took over responsibility for Ghazni in October 2008, fighting had reportedly spiked nearly one hundred percent since 2007, making it the fifth most active province in the country.²⁷⁸ Task Force White Eagle maintains responsibility for Ghazni today with a troop presence numbering just over 2,000.²⁷⁹

Contributing to the worsening security situation was the increase in weapons and fighters from Pakistan's tribal areas which peaked after the peace agreements between the government of Pakistan and militants in the Waziristans in 2008.²⁸⁰ For the Haqqanis, an expansion into Ghazni would allow for possible control over segments of Highway One. This would provide the network with increased funding through taxation at checkpoints, the ability to demand bribes from Afghan contractors in exchange for not attacking NATO-ISAF logistical convoys, and the use of the Highway to send men and materials into Kabul to conduct attacks. Yet, the Haqqani network was not able to consolidate such control over the roadway.

While the Taliban appears to orchestrate the majority of insurgent activity in Ghazni, HiG and Haqqani-linked fighters also maintain a firm presence in Ghazni. The Haqqani network's activity in Ghazni is primarily concentrated in the southeastern section of the province. One of Siraj Haqqani's top commanders, Maulvi Sangeen, who is known to operate in Paktika and Ghazni, claimed responsibility for the abduction of Pfc. Bowie Bergdahl from Paktika province in July 2009.²⁸¹ A spokesman for Sangeen threatened to kill Bergdahl unless the U.S. stopped airstrikes in Ghazni's Giro and Paktika's Koshamand district.²⁸² This may signal the importance of these districts for either the Haqqani network's attempts to expand into southern Ghazni for access to Highway One, or as a

favor to Mullah Omar and the Taliban fighters who control the area. Air support was frequently used to deter and respond to enemy attacks on major roadways, coalition outposts, and to target IED emplacement teams and foreign fighter infiltration routes in southern and eastern Ghazni.²⁸³

Ultimately, Haqqani expansion into southeastern Ghazni has been of limited utility and it is not clear that they are able to exert influence over segments of Highway One. It is likely that the network does not possess the local ties or a sizable fighting force to establish a permanent, large-scale presence in predominately Taliban territory. Taliban commanders who are often responsible for funding their own operations would not have welcomed a large Haqqani presence, since it would threaten their funding streams. Furthermore, a significant presence of foreign fighters would have upset the local population, who see the foreigners



MAP 5 | GHAZNI AND WARDAK

as unwelcome outsiders. At the district and village level, issues such as these often complicate the working relationship between insurgents of different group affiliations

Wardak province surrounds the western approaches to Kabul, encompassing the southern reaches of the Hindu-Kush. The majority of the province is mountainous or semi-mountainous with narrow valleys perforating the land. Agriculture is the livelihood for approximately half of Wardak's population.²⁸⁴ Much like Logar, the province is overwhelmingly Pashtun with a strong Hazara minority in the west.²⁸⁵ Wardak is particularly important to the insurgency, not only because of its proximity to Kabul, but because of Highway One which runs from Kabul, through Wardak's capital of Maidan Shar into Ghazni and then on to Kandahar. Much like Ghazni, the majority of enemy activity in Wardak is conducted by Taliban-affiliated insurgents, not by the Haqqanis or HiG.

In late 2008, insurgents created the perception that they were encircling the Afghan capital of Kabul. Although it was extremely unlikely that they could ever amass the combat power required to lay siege to the city, senior ISAF command decided to reinforce Logar and Wardak. In February 2009, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division arrived in southeastern Afghanistan and Lieutenant Colonel Kimo Gallahue's 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment was given the responsibility for Wardak province along with a smaller artillery battalion and approximately 800 ANA.²⁸⁶ In late April 2008, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry took over responsibility for Ghazni and Wardak from 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry.²⁸⁷ Approximately 250 soldiers were given the responsibility for all of Wardak province, an area approximately twice the size of Rhode Island.²⁸⁸ The most notorious stretch of insurgent-held terrain is the Jalrez Valley—a stretch of fruit orchards and rocky slopes that cuts through the province, providing easy access to Kabul.²⁸⁹ I-506th discovered hundreds of foreign fighters in the province, including Pakistanis, Chechens and Turks affiliated with the Haqqani network in addition to elements of HiG.²⁹⁰

Currently, the Haqqani network maintains a minimal presence in Wardak.²⁹¹ In years past, the Haqqanis' presence was limited to facilitation efforts for activities in and around Kabul. Today, the Haqqanis have preferred to operate out of northern Logar, although they have shown interest in moving into Wardak. Thus far, the Haqqani network has not successfully expanded their presence in the province. As long as the network can continue to project into Kabul from northern Logar, it is unlikely that they will invest the resources and personnel that would be required to establish an operational presence in Wardak.

THE HAQQANI NETWORK'S LOGAR EXPANSION

Since at least 2003, the Haqqani network has been responsible for military operations in the Southeast. The Haqqani network sought to expand beyond their traditional stronghold in Loya-Paktia into Logar in order to project men and materiel into Kabul to launch spectacular, high-profile suicide attacks on Afghan, U.S., and coalition targets.

The southern approach to Kabul runs through Logar province. The eastern half of the province is almost entirely mountainous while the western half is relatively flat and contains the majority of the province's population. Highway One runs north to south through the center of the province, connecting Kabul to the southeastern provinces. The majority of the population earns their living through seasonal agriculture, including wheat, maize, fruit and nut trees, grapes and vegetables while some engage in animal husbandry, trade and services and other forms of non-farm labor.²⁹² Unlike Ghazni and Wardak provinces, the Haqqanis currently maintained a significant presence in Logar.

Two main factors aided the insurgency in their attempt to constitute an effective network in Logar: the corruption of state institutions, including the judiciary and general ineffectiveness of district and provincial officials and institutions and the sidelining of influential religious leaders in a province with historical high levels of religious sentiment.²⁹³ The population was certainly more

receptive to insurgents' message since there was widespread discontent regarding the efficacy of the district and provincial government. This helped to facilitate their expansion.²⁹⁴

From 2005 to 2007, the Haqqani and QST insurgents expanded their presence in Logar, establishing organized fighter cells in Kharwar, Charkh, Baraki Barak and Pul-i Alam.²⁹⁵ The QST was the main insurgent force in Logar at the time, though groups such as HiG and Haqqani were also present, in addition to military elements of former President Rabbani's political party, Jami'at-I Islami.²⁹⁶ One significant development was the arrival of Haqqani-linked commander Mullah Abdullah (AKA Mullah Toor) in late 2006-early 2007.²⁹⁷ Both Abdullah and Mir Ahmad Gul, a Taliban-affiliated commander from Pul-i Alam, claimed to be the sole provincial commander, although it appears only Gul was sanctioned as such by Taliban supreme leadership in Quetta. Mullah Abdullah maintained close ties to Siraj Haqqani and it may be that Abdullah's arrival in Logar marked the beginning of the Haqqanis increasing influence in the province.

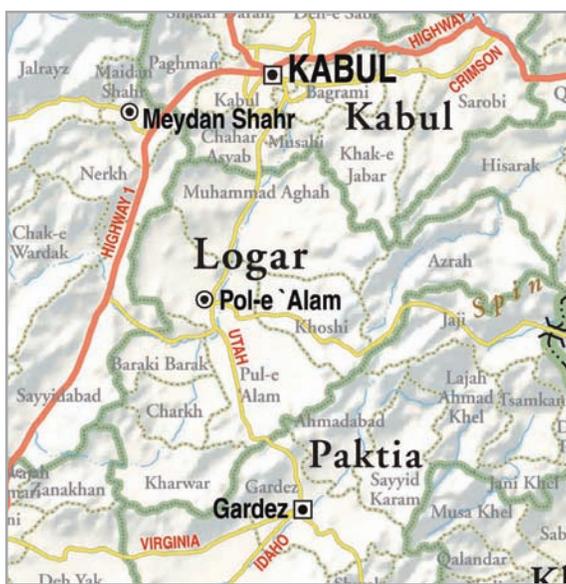
By 2008, Haqqani and HiG forces accounted for the majority of the insurgency in the province while the Taliban fighters were primarily limited to the remote, isolated Kharwar province where they instituted strict shadow governance and

sharia law.²⁹⁸ In February 2008, individuals with links to the Haqqani network were captured in Logar, where they had been operating in the area for five months.²⁹⁹ They also maintained ties with Al-Qaeda fighters in North Waziristan.³⁰⁰ It was evident by April 2008 that there was "a push by the Haqqani network in particular into the center of Afghanistan ... that is the area in and around Kabul, provinces like Wardak and Logar."³⁰¹ Mullah Abdullah was asked by senior Quetta leadership to relocate to Khost in early 2008 after a growing rift with Mir led to a physical confrontation at a senior-level meeting in Pakistan.³⁰² Yet this did not appear to have constrained the Haqqani network's ability to operate in Logar.

In March of 2009, approximately 800 soldiers with the 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment of the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division, 3rd Brigade Combat Team took responsibility for Logar, relieving approximately 200-250 soldiers with the 4th BCT, 101st Airborne Division.³⁰³ 3-71 was supplemented with approximately 1,600 ANA and Afghan National Police (ANP). Originally, 3-71 decided to concentrate their force in the southwestern sector of the province, in order to disrupt Haqqani efforts in Mohammad Agha and Pul-i Alam.³⁰⁴ As U.S. forces operated in the area, they discovered suicide vests, SVBIEDs, and other equipment associated with attacks in Kabul.³⁰⁵

In the summer of 2009, the enemy began preparations to undermine the Afghan presidential election. Senior Haqqani commanders returned to Pakistan for increased training on IEDs and rocket systems to mount an effective campaign against Afghan and coalition efforts to create a stable security environment for the elections.³⁰⁶ In Mohammad Agha district, HiG forces distributed night letters warning the locals not to vote.³⁰⁷ Furthermore, Haqqani insurgents brought in large sums of money, likely from Miram Shah, and increased its recruiting and bribes to the ANSF—all designed to decrease stability and dissuade the local population from voting.³⁰⁸

After the elections, Haqqani fighters shifted their strategy. Many senior commanders migrated back to Khost and likely back across the border to Pakistan, where they would remain for the winter.³⁰⁹



MAP 6 | LOGAR

Rather than focusing exclusively on kinetic attacks and propaganda efforts, insurgents attempted to infiltrate the contracting market and influence political and governance decisions.³¹⁰ This allowed the insurgency direct and indirect access to the massive amount of aid flowing into the province, in addition to smaller amounts of funding from chromite smuggling and kidnapping. Additionally, funding from Pakistan flowed in and was doled out on many levels to fighters and senior commanders to finance their attacks.³¹¹

The enemy's tactics, techniques and procedures in Logar transitioned away from direct engagement and large-scale confrontation both because of their ineffectiveness. Instead, Haqqani fighters are attempting to destabilize governance and reconstruction efforts from the inside while continuing to operate on the periphery and around Afghan and coalition priority areas in order to maintain their ability to project force and resource attacks in Kabul.

STRIKING KABUL

The Haqqanis' ability to launch suicide attacks in Afghanistan's capital city has steadily increased over the past several years due to their expanded network in Logar province and the supply of men and materials from Pakistan-based foreign fighters. As the strategic and economic center of Afghanistan, the seat of government, the home to every major international embassy and non-governmental organizations, and the headquarters of Afghan and ISAF forces, Kabul is a natural enemy target. According to a senior Taliban figure in Pakistan, the focus on Kabul "can create panic and undermine the last vestiges of support for the regime."³¹² If the insurgency can launch spectacular suicide attacks in Afghan's capital city, it fosters the perception that insurgents are able to operate even in the most fortified areas and that the government and its coalition allies are unable to stop them.

The majority of the attacks that are launched in Kabul are executed by the Kabul Attack Network (KAN). The KAN is comprised of Taliban, HiG and Haqqani fighters that cooperate to successfully execute attacks against opportunistic and strategic

targets in Kabul.³¹³ The network is led by Dawood, the Taliban's shadow governor of Kabul and Taj Mir Jawad, a top Haqqani network leader.³¹⁴ Based on an analysis of suicide attacks in Kabul, it does not appear that HiG or Taliban fighters have the regional logistics platform or technical know-how to conduct the more sophisticated attacks. For this reason, it is believed that the Haqqani network is the primary planner and operational lead for many of these attacks.

As early as 2007, there were reports that insurgents were establishing bases of operations in districts and provinces in and around Kabul.³¹⁵ These bases were established in Kabul and Logar and resourced by suicide bombers who could be assigned to strike targets in the nation's capital.³¹⁶ Commanders based inside the capital city would direct bombers to their targets.³¹⁷ Insurgents did not intend to take over the capital; rather, their actions were part of a propaganda campaign to weaken public confidence, drain scarce resources and threaten the morale of government officials. KAN insurgents were said to have divided the capital into fifteen zones, each with its own operatives who would resource and direct attacks.³¹⁸ Each cell operates independently from each other and the details of other cells are known only to senior commanders based in Pakistan.³¹⁹

Suicide attacks in Kabul can be divided into two basic categories: attacks, usually by suicide bombers, on coalition convoys entering or exiting military establishments and embassy vehicles transiting to and from secure compounds inside the city center; and attacks on high-profile infrastructure, which require significant planning, direction and organization. The latter attacks are typically the most high-profile attacks designed to capture headlines and inflict mass casualties. Both are executed by the Haqqani network with planning, resourcing, and assistance from Pakistani-based elements such as al-Qaeda, LeT, JeM, the ISI and Pakistani Taliban such as the TTP, Maulvi Nazir, Gul Bahadur's Utmanzi Wazir tribal fighters and others.

In 2008, there were only a handful of SVBIED attacks on coalition convoys and embassy vehicles.³²⁰ Yet, at that time, there was a sudden increase in high-profile attacks executed by the Haqqani

network with the help of other Pakistani-based malign actors. This bolstered the false perception that the insurgency was poised to capture the Afghan capital.

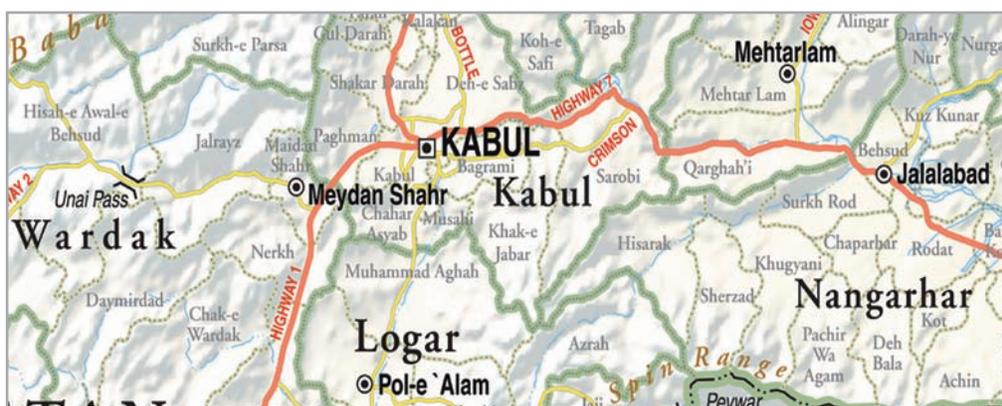
In January 2008, attackers wearing police uniforms stormed the luxury Serena Hotel in Kabul, using hand grenades and automatic weapons to breach the perimeter security installations.³²¹ One suicide bomber detonated inside the hotel, reportedly targeting the Norwegian foreign minister who was staying at the hotel.³²² Norway has been singled out by al-Qaeda on two separate occasions for their participation in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, suggesting that the organization may have had a role in targeting selection.³²³ The targeting of coalition allies is part of an attempt by the insurgency to pressure such nations to withdraw, thus slowly whittling away at the strength and unity of the coalition effort. The attack was also launched just hours after the Kabul Police chief announced that “fool proof” security measures were installed in the capital ahead of Ashura, a Shi’a holiday marking the martyrdom of Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad.³²⁴ According to a captured member of the assault team, a man named Abdullah from Miram Shah, the headquarters of the Haqqani network, planned the attack.³²⁵

Several months later, in April 2008, militants launched a multi-pronged attack at a parade ceremony to mark the 16th anniversary of the overthrow of Afghanistan’s Soviet-backed rule. President Karzai was in attendance, although Taliban and Haqqani spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid insisted that Karzai was not the target.³²⁶

Armed militants and suicide bombers were prepared to attack the VIP stand where Karzai and other notables were seated while a mortar team prepared to fire from a nearby hotel.³²⁷ Both Zabihullah Mujahid and HiG claimed credit for the attack while Afghanistan’s intelligence service, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), accused the ISI of direct involvement.³²⁸ A raid of a militant safe-house in Kabul connected to the parade attack revealed that the attackers were in constant connection with individuals in Miram Shah, Bajaur, Waziristan and Peshawar, all strongholds of the HiG and Haqqani networks.³²⁹

A SVBIED detonated outside the entrance to the Indian embassy in July 2008, killing forty. The target was allegedly two diplomatic vehicles entering the compound.³³⁰ The NDS accused the ISI of having a hand in the attacks. The driver of the SVBIED was a twenty two-year-old Pakistani named Hamza Shakoor, who was recruited by LeT.³³¹ While U.S. officials suspected followers of the Haqqani network carried out the attack, it appears to have been aided by LeT resources and ISI assistance. This is part of a growing trend in attacks targeting Indian involvement in Afghanistan.³³² In exchange for maintaining command and control mechanisms in Miram Shah and operating a virtual safe-haven for foreign militants, the Haqqanis often strike Indian targets as a favor to their patrons, the ISI.

2009 witnessed an increase in high-profile suicide attacks. SVBIEDs targeted embassy entrances, a United Nations guesthouse, Bagram air base, Kabul International Airport and Camp Phoenix housing the ANA and ANP training facilities.³³³



MAP 7 | KABUL

They also targeted Afghan government sites, including the Justice and Education Ministries as well as the Prison directorate.³³⁴ One attack outside the German embassy in January 2009 was allegedly planned and directed by a senior insurgent in northern Logar who was killed by ASNF and coalition forces just days after the embassy attack.³³⁵ The force also apprehended a suicide bomber facilitator in Kabul linked with the attack.³³⁶ Just weeks later, in early February, intelligence led Afghan forces to apprehend seventeen militants, including three Pakistanis in Kabul. The group was believed to be affiliated with the Haqqani network, and its ringleader was a Pakistani national.³³⁷

Though the Haqqani network was able to continue to operate in Kabul in 2010, the lethality and complexity of its attacks has diminished. Attacks by the Haqqani network were mainly limited to small-scale SVBIEDs rather than complex attacks on heavily fortified Afghan or international targets. This reduction in their capabilities comes amidst efforts by Afghan and ISAF forces to target the Haqqani network in Kabul and southeastern Afghanistan.

TARGETING THE HAQQANIS

Since the fall of 2009, U.S. and Afghan forces in southeastern Afghanistan have focused considerable attention and resources on degrading and disrupting the Haqqani network. In part, the increase in special operations forces ordered by General Stanley McChrystal has provided ISAF with significantly more resources.³³⁸ These “targeted, intelligence-driven precision operations” are a very important element in the overall approach, according to ISAF Commander General David Petraeus.³³⁹ Although these operations were occurring prior to the fall of 2009, they have been significantly expanded. Throughout the summer months of 2010, special operations forces conducted over 4,000 missions throughout the country at a rate of more than forty per day.³⁴⁰ These raids resulted in the death or capture of over 200 militant leaders, 1,066 insurgent fighters and 1,673 detained.³⁴¹ Particularly in the Southeast, the offensive operations by special operations forces

along with efforts by conventional forces have had a profound impact on Haqqani network operations.

Spearheading the fight against the Haqqani network in Loya-Paktia is a Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) task force led by Vice Adm. Bill McRaven. JSOC includes some of the U.S. military’s most elite units, including Navy Seals, Delta Force, 75th Ranger Regiment and others. Their efforts are complemented by the separate activities of ISAF’s special operations task force including elements from eighteen countries.³⁴² Special operations forces have prioritized the Haqqanis to degrade their effectiveness and to “open a trail” that leads directly to al-Qaeda’s senior leadership.³⁴³ In September 2010 alone, more than 105 Haqqani and Taliban leaders, shadow governors, sub-leaders and facilitators were captured or killed.³⁴⁴ In the Southeast, the task force primarily targets low-level Haqqani fighters and facilitators and uses the intelligence gained in those operations to go after higher ranking insurgents, forcing senior commanders in North Waziristan to reconstitute their Afghan networks and fill tactical and operational gaps.³⁴⁵ Over the next four to six months, “interrogators, exploiters [and] collection managers” plus intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets will arrive, vastly expanding the capability to target insurgents. The goal is to achieve the same level of kinetic activity and effectiveness that the U.S. achieved in Iraq.³⁴⁶

The counterterrorism efforts by special operations forces mutually reinforced the ongoing counterinsurgency operations by conventional U.S. forces, particularly in Logar. Beginning in the fall of 2009, Task Force Yukon increased the targeting of insurgent operations in Loya-Paktia, northern Logar, and portions of Wardak that had previously served as enemy safe havens or helped insurgents move fighters and materials into Kabul to execute attacks. Counterinsurgent operations in northern Logar focused on clearing Mohammad Agha and Pul-I Alam, which served as the main facilitation point for elements of the Kabul Attack Network in Kabul, and especially for the construction of SVBIEDs and suicide vests.³⁴⁷

The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team (Task Force Bayonet), led by Col. James Johnson, took over responsibility for Logar and Wardak in December 2009. This enabled Task Force Rakkasan to concentrate their efforts in Loya-Paktia while ceding Logar and Wardak to Col. Johnson's brigade. Several months later, in April 2010, Rakkasan, Bayonet, and special operations forces teams began a sustained campaign against Haqqani-affiliated fighters. The pace of operations increased steadily throughout the course of the spring and summer of 2010. ISAF and Afghan forces targeted Haqqani network cells in northern Logar, eastern Wardak and Loya-Paktia.³⁴⁸ In Loya-Paktia, these assaults focused on mid- and senior-level Haqqani commanders and facilitators, weapons and ammunition storage caches, and safe-houses in the mountain sanctuaries of the Loya-Paktia and in the Khost bowl itself. In June 2010, the outgoing commander of RC-East stated, "I would say [the enemy network] is degraded... we along with special operations forces that work with us have had a great effect against the Haqqani network. And we can see that we've stressed their leadership, their facilitation, the movement of their expertise and resupply."³⁴⁹ Though specific information regarding the special operations campaign is difficult to detail in the open-source due to its classified nature, the effects on the enemy network have been readily apparent.

The Haqqani network has not been able to conduct the multi-stage, multi-target, sophisticated attacks at the rate it could in previous years. Throughout the spring and summer of 2010, one of the few incidents was the attack on President Karzai's peace jirga in early June 2010. Multiple attacks targeted the jirga tent on the grounds of Kabul's Polytechnic University with suicide bombers, rockets and machine gun fire.³⁵⁰ In all, the attack lasted for several hours but was eventually repulsed by Afghan police.³⁵¹ Further, high-profile attacks from the Haqqanis have failed to materialize, including a failed plan to target July's Kabul Conference.³⁵² It is likely that, although the Kabul Attack Network continues to carry out smaller and less sophisticated attacks, the contribution of expertise, planning and logistical coordination from the Haqqanis has been limited by conventional and special operations



A combined Afghan and international security force moves towards its objective Oct. 31, 2009, in Khost province, Afghanistan. The joint force detained four suspected militants after searching a compound known to be used by a Haqqani enabler. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Troy Davis/Released)

forces raids throughout the first half of 2010.

Throughout the latter half of 2009 and 2010, the Haqqani network adjusted its tactics and operations. In Loya-Paktia, the network has virtually ceased efforts aimed at destroying the KG road and relies less on large-scale direct assaults and mass-infantry attacks on district centers.³⁵³ Given the insurgency's need to maintain financing for their operations, it is plausible to assume that Haqqani and his senior commanders have cut deals with construction firms and security contractors in the Zadran arc, promising to limit attacks on the road in exchange for cash payments. Haqqani may have calculated that an immediate infusion of cash was ultimately more important than preventing construction of a road project that has already been hampered by significant non-security issues. Second, attacks on the road significantly upset the local population in proximity to the KG pass. In the spring and summer of 2009, locals requested that Haqqani commanders cease targeting the road and road crews.³⁵⁴ Attacks on the road and road crews have decreased since then, although they have not ceased altogether, suggesting that occasional attacks benefit both the Haqqanis and Afghan contractors seeking more resources, time and funds due to the perception of insecurity.³⁵⁵

The Haqqanis have been forced to scale back attacks on district centers, fortified government infrastructure and mass-infantry attacks throughout the latter half of 2009 and first half of 2010, out of concern for the loss of indigenous human capital. The population that Haqqani relies on for recruits, shelter and support has grown increasingly frustrated with the preponderance of civilian casualties and the death of recruits in Haqqani-linked operations.³⁵⁶ Foreign militants and to a lesser extent, QST and HiG are not particularly concerned about civilian casualties. This has been a friction point between Haqqani commanders, the population and fighters foreign to the immediate area.³⁵⁷ The Haqqanis have not been able to conduct large-scale direct assaults, and instead have relied increasingly on asymmetric attacks such as IEDs.³⁵⁸

Though the Haqqani network has been limited in its ability to stage large-scale assaults within Afghanistan, it has prioritized efforts to attack U.S. and Afghan positions near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Such attacks are possible due to the porous border and large supply of fighters in North Waziristan. In late August and September 2010, Haqqani attacks against coalition bases suddenly spiked. A coordinated, double suicide attack on Forward Operation Bases Salerno and Chapman by Haqqani fighters in late August was the largest assault on U.S. bases in Afghanistan since late-spring.³⁵⁹ The attack was ultimately repelled by U.S. forces. Throughout the month of September 2010, there were three recorded mass infantry attacks against coalition bases along the Afghanistan border in Khost and Paktika and one coordinated suicide attack against Forward Operating Base Gardez in Paktia.³⁶⁰ All of these attacks failed to seize their objectives, and did not display the high-degree of planning and coordination evident in previous attacks. Three of these attacks were executed by foreign Haqqani fighters that crossed over into Afghanistan from North Waziristan. Rather than relying on indigenous, tribal fighters to stage unsuccessful mass-infantry attacks against U.S. and Afghan positions, the network has turned to foreign recruits from the Waziristans, evidenced by their target selection and the fact that these attackers are seen crossing into Afghanistan from

North Waziristan.³⁶¹ This targeting also suggests a desire to fix limited U.S. and Afghan forces on remote border outposts rather than having those forces able to conduct population-centric counterinsurgency in key population and economic zones. The fact that the Haqqani network can leverage its sanctuaries in Pakistan to continue its attacks in Loya-Paktia, despite the degradation of the network, necessitates operations targeting the enemy in Pakistan.

Complementing the special operations forces campaign against Haqqani-affiliated fighters in Afghanistan is an expanded drone campaign against Haqqani command and control infrastructure in North Waziristan. Drone strikes against the Haqqanis and al-Qaeda affiliated foreign militants in North Waziristan began in earnest in 2009. A September 2009 drone strike unsuccessfully targeted Illyas Kashmiri in North Waziristan, the reported head of al-Qaeda's paramilitary force, or Shadow Army.³⁶² Drones nearly missed high-level al-Qaeda figures Mustafa al-Yazid and Sheikh Fateh al-Masri in Spalaga, North Waziristan in October 2009.³⁶³ In May 2010, a drone strike successfully targeted Yazid in Haqqani territory in North Waziristan. Yazid was replaced by Sheikh Fateh al-Masri, the newly named leader of al-Qaeda in the Khorasan (Qaedat al Jihad fi Khorasan or the base of the jihad in the Khorasan), an area including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.³⁶⁴ In addition to killing senior insurgent leaders, the drone strikes have undoubtedly made it more difficult for Haqqani senior leadership to plan and coordinate sophisticated attacks, perhaps contributing to the decrease in spectacular attacks in Kabul throughout 2010.

Drone attacks increased in frequency in late summer 2010, allegedly after senior Pakistani officials made it clear that they were reluctant to move against the Haqqani network in North Waziristan.³⁶⁵ Despite statements to the contrary, Pakistan never truly intended to launch full-scale operations against the Haqqanis in North Waziristan because elements of the Pakistani security apparatus continue to view the group as their main proxy for influence in Afghanistan. In mid-September 2010, a

drone strike killed Saifullah, a Haqqani military commander in Afghanistan and cousin of Siraj Haqqani in North Waziristan.³⁶⁶ Just ten days later, al-Qaeda's number three most senior commander, Sheikh Fateh al-Masri, was killed in a September 25, 2010 drone strike in Datta Khel, North Waziristan, a hub for Haqqani fighters under the control of tribal leader Hafiz Gul Bahadar.³⁶⁷ September's drone strikes represent the highest monthly total since the program was initiated in 2004. According to a senior NATO official in Kabul, the U.S. has not achieved the "industrial level of exploitation and analysis that we achieved in Iraq –yet– but we're damn close to it."³⁶⁸

CONCLUSION

Given limited resources and a prioritization of southern Afghanistan, U.S. and ISAF forces do not have the capability to clear and hold large swaths of terrain in the Southeast. Instead, senior commanders have chosen to concentrate conventional forces on practicing counterinsurgency in key population and economic centers, securing major roadways, linking these key zones and using special operations forces and other key conventional forces to target Haqqani fighters, facilitators, and infrastructure in southeastern Afghanistan. Initially, the lack of both conventional and special operations forces achieved little enduring effects in countering Haqqani expansion. Yet, there are now two U.S. brigades dedicated to the Southeast. This has been complemented by a massive increase in special operations forces to aggressively target the enemy and an increased drone campaign against Haqqani command and control locations in North Waziristan. U.S., coalition, and Afghan forces have managed to reverse the momentum of the Haqqani network. Despite these successes, pressure must be maintained on the Haqqani network, as it typically takes only six or seven weeks for these local networks or cells to reconstitute.³⁶⁹

Going forward, there are several recommendations for continuing to degrade the effectiveness of the Haqqani network:

Continue to check Haqqani expansion.

Haqqani network infrastructure in northern Logar that was used to project force into Kabul to execute spectacular attacks has been largely degraded. Yet, Haqqani network fighters will likely attempt to diversify their operational approaches to Kabul by expanding to other provinces that surround the capital. The Haqqanis maintain strong linkages with the IJU, which is active in Kapisa province to the northeast of Kabul.³⁷⁰ They have exploited these ties in the past to increase their geographic area of operations, currently operating in Kunduz province with the help of Uzbek fighters.³⁷¹ ISAF and Afghan forces must not let this happen. Although it is unlikely that a large-scale Haqqani presence could take root outside of the Southeast, ISAF must work to target Haqqani operations not just in southeastern Afghanistan, but wherever they begin to sprout.

Take away the Haqqani network's base of support in Loya-Paktia.

The majority of the Haqqanis' indigenous support in Loya-Paktia comes from mixed tribal elements in Musa Khel, Sabari, Bak, Terayzai and the Zadran Arch. If coalition forces do not have the number of forces required to clear and hold these areas, the ANA should be used as a stop-gap to make inroads into these areas. In particular, the Zadran tribe is particularly aggrieved and isolated. Serious efforts must be made to reconnect with the Zadrans, and not simply through influential figures such as Pacha Khan Zadran, but to local elites and respected tribal figures. ISAF must build relationships with these leaders too rather than simply relying on regional government officials who do not always have the best interests of the population in mind. A history of broken promises has left the Zadran distrustful of U.S. and Afghan efforts in Loya Paktia. Furthermore, elements of the Zadran are the Haqqani networks main support base in Loya Paktia. Any efforts that can be undertaken to weaken that relationship and strengthen tribal leader's relationship with ISAF and the Afghan government must be considered.

Expand the current Special Forces operational tempo.

Success against al-Qaeda in Iraq was achieved, in part, by targeting low-level fighters which generated the intelligence that allowed for the targeting of higher level commanders. This slowly tears the network apart from the inside, simultaneously forcing senior commanders to continually attempt to reboot defunct cells. Increasing pressure on these cells and targeting newly appointed commanders, while ratcheting-up the drone campaign against command and control locations in North Waziristan, makes it very difficult for the enemy to continue this cycle in perpetuity. Still, it is important to recognize the role of conventional forces in providing additional intelligence that enables targeting of insurgents in Afghanistan through their counterinsurgency operations and constant contact with the population.

Expand the drone campaign in Pakistan.

The operational tempo of the drone strikes in North Waziristan since early September 2010 is unprecedented. As long as Pakistan refuses to take action against the Haqqanis and al-Qaeda affiliates in North Waziristan, this campaign should continue or expand to the extent that targets continue to present themselves. In part, this intelligence is gained through special operations forces and conventional operations in the southeast and covert CIA actions in the border region. Although drone strikes are a necessary disruption tool, strikes alone are not capable of defeating an insurgent network.

Conduct limited, unilateral raids by special operations forces on Haqqani command and control nodes in North Waziristan.

Pakistan could do more against Afghan-focused insurgent groups. In the case of the Haqqani network, they do not want to because the Haqqanis remain a valuable proxy force representing their interests in the Pashtun east. Limited, unilateral raids by U.S. special operations forces should be used when necessary to kill or capture key Haqqani and al-Qaeda insurgents. Senior insurgents who can be taken alive can provide valuable, timely intelligence that can be exploited to capture or kill the most senior leaders of these deadly networks. Of course, any such operations must be balanced with considerations of the likely response by Pakistan.

Taking the fight to the Haqqani network in Afghanistan and Pakistan should remain the priority mission in Regional Command East. The Haqqani network's links with al-Qaeda and other international and regional terrorists groups are well documented and stronger than they have ever been. The Haqqanis continue to provide shelter and protection for these groups in North Waziristan.³⁷² It has only been within the past year that ISAF has possessed the resources and capabilities to make inroads against the Haqqanis in southeastern Afghanistan. Continued ISAF efforts to disrupt and dismantle the Haqqani network's Afghan infrastructure and operations may have implications for the group's relationship with elements of the Pakistani security establishment. If the Haqqanis no longer represent an effective and reliable proxy for Pakistani interests in Afghanistan, they could become more of a liability than an asset. Though initial success against the network is an encouraging sign of progress, much work remains to be done to neutralize this most lethal enemy.

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