

Al-Qa'ida's Finances: Evidence of Organizational Decline?

Apr 17, 2008



Articles & Testimony

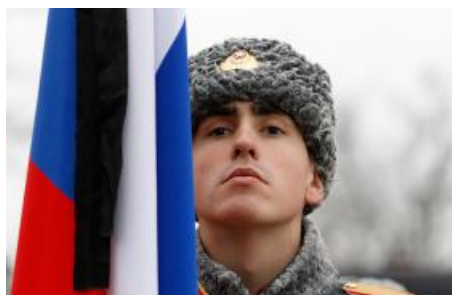
Speaking before congress in February, Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Michael McConnell commented that during the previous 12-18 months the intelligence community noticed that "al Qaeda has had difficulty in raising funds and sustaining themselves." In early April, Undersecretary of the Treasury Stuart Levey echoed the DNI's assessment, adding that the government's efforts to combat terrorist financing "are more integrated than ever before" and have enabled the government to disrupt or deter some sources of al-Qa'ida financing and make "significant progress mapping terrorist networks." A Philippine military official, for example, recently disclosed that lack of funding was a major factor hindering the al-Qa'ida-linked Abu Sayyaf terrorist group from carrying out major attacks, the last of which was conducted in 2005.

Despite being short on cash, however, al-Qa'ida and like-minded global jihadist terrorist groups still pose an acute threat. Authorities have foiled recent terrorist plots in Germany, the United Kingdom and Spain; counter-terrorism officials in France neutralized seven operational cells in the past year and officials there stress that France remains "at the top of the list" of al-Qa'ida targets; and the director of the National Counter-Terrorism Center recently warned that "the al Qaeda threat still looms large."

The means that al-Qa'ida and affiliated groups use to raise, move and store funds present an ever moving target, as the methods of financiers and cells evolve in response to counter-measures. There are, however, some discernable trends in al-Qa'ida financing. . . .

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