
From: Andrea Pfanzelter [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2015 11:47 PM
To: Terje Rod-Larsen; Jeff Epstein
Attachments: polio feb 15.doc; ATT00001.htm

Report by IPI on 2 recent polio-related incidents, as requested:

Note: IPI research began as usual, right after these incidents were reported in the Pak local media, IPI's database is kept updated on all such incidents.

(i) Zhob= Balochistan: Zhob is of geo-strategic importance for the Taliban (both TTPakistan & TTAfghanistan) as it shares a border with South Waziristan, Dera Ismail Khan (& other trouble spots) as well as Afghanistan – & connects Balochistan with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & Punjab; Zhob is also important as a major landroute for goods transport between KP & Karachi port. Zhob Airport was used by NATO 2009-2011. The border area is protected by Pakistan's paramilitary Frontier Corps. Zhob is an important passageway for militants, smugglers & Afghan refugees. There are a number of TTP "camps" in Zhob, with large caches of arms, ammunition, explosives. Hence for a number of years, security forces have carried out repeated operations in the area (including helicopters), leading to increased kidnappings & terror actions by militant groups to protect their camps, including attacks on Levies checkpoints especially in Murgha Kibzai. This makes Zhob a no-go + high-risk area. The polio-related kidnapping was most recently preceded by the kidnapping of six Pak Telecommunication Co. staff (including 2 engineers, all still missing). The most important political party in the Zhob area is the religion-based Jamiat Ulema e Islam (JUI). The important militant groups in Zhob are: TTP & some of its splinter groups; Jundallah – a militant group dating to pre-Taliban days, which has in recent years shown renewed terror activity; Jundallah claimed the 26 Nov 2012 attack (when it attacked a polio team in Eastern Bypass area of Quetta, killing 4 polio workers) & has in the past 12 months allied itself with other militant groups such as TTP & splinters, as well as the anti-shiite Lashkar Jhangvi.

Polio incident: On Friday 13 February 2015 ca. 23:00, the polio team (3 polio workers & 2 accompanying Levies) was last in contact, on their way back. Pak security forces launched a search/rescue operation (ca. 250 FC) in Toda Kibzai/Murgha Kibzai area; during an exchange of fire, two suicide bombers blew themselves up on Sunday 15 Feb pm – the 1st suicide bombing in connection with polio! Four bodies & the polio ambulance were recovered (3 so far identified: 1 ambulance driver & 2 Levies). The fate of the still-missing workers is not yet known, the militants switch locations to avoid detection. IPI is following up. The Balochistan Provincial Govt has postponed PE in Quetta, Zhob, Sherani & Sibi districts. =/p>

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Refusals: <=span>PEP refusals are related to parental refusal which pre-dates the Taliban ban. <=span>

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IPI recommendation: As requested. <=font>

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In view of the inter-related context as above, attacks by militants (whether shooting, kidnapping or other) is part of the strategy by militants, especially TTP, to attack security forces – it is not a new tactic. It pre-dates the Zarb Azab military operation begun in June 2014, but now, in response, all uniformed personnel, anywhere in Pakistan, are renewed targets of the TTP & its allies. The police and/or Levies accompanying polio teams offer the right target & polio workers are collateral damage, sometimes in gunfire by the security forces.

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Since the December 2014 suicide operation on the Army Public School in Peshawar, a true game-changer, members of TTP, Lashkar Jhangvi, Jundallah & allies are being hanged by the authorities – hence any chance of a dialogue with any of the militant groups cited above is, for the present, neither possible nor recommended.

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In addition, IPI notes that the 4 day 16-19 February PEP in Quetta was postponed both due to PM Sharif's visit as all security forces were diverted for his protection + Matriculation exams beginning 18 February. IPI therefore recommends that PEP be coordinated in advance regarding known events such as examinations. What cannot be foreseen are security-related postponements, as in December 2014. Also, the renewed campaign by UNICEF which focuses on parental refusal should be improved (it is criticized by the target group, inter alia, as not adequately taking into account local cultural traditions).

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(ii) Khyber Agency, FATA: Khyber Agency is geo-strategically important, historically as well as in the present context. It touches Peshawar, KP's provincial capital, two other FATA agencies + Afghanistan, in addition to being the entry/exit point for the traffic & transport of people, goods, NATO supplies. As the military operation Zarb Azab progressed, militants fleeing North Waziristan have sought refuge in Khyber, leading the Pak military to launch a military operation titled Khyber I in mid-October 2014. Even prior to this launch, parts of Khyber (in particular Bara & Tirah Valley) saw combat between militant groups & Pak military – the former composed of a combination of 3 militant groups which elsewhere have been fighting each other, but are here defending a prized transit route for mass smuggling. Khyber I is also aimed at clearing the transit route for NATO's retrograde mission (supplies & equipment being withdrawn from Afghanistan). Khyber has valuable mineral deposits & mines, exploited by militant groups for income.

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Polio incident: On Sat 14 February 2015, gunmen fired at a van carrying a polio vaccination team, killing the driver, as it was preparing for a 3-day PEP 16-18 February. The shots were fired from a nearby hill in the Lowi Shalman area of Landi Kotal, Khyber, which has, in addition to the aspects cited above, valuable mineral deposits which are mined & sold by the militants. On the same day, a number of militants were killed by Pak forces in an adjacent FATA area, as Pak forces began preparations to launch a fresh crackdown in Bara, & locals were ordered to evacuate the area by that pm. IPI does not see this as either a direct attack on the polio team, nor an attempted abduction – the militants shoot from surrounding hilltops at anything which moves & go into hiding only when Pak helicopters secure the area above.

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Other polio=related recent attacks:

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