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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.&nbs=; 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 checkposts 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).&nbs=; 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 PEP 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 =ot 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, som=times in gunfire by the security forces.

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Since the Dece=ber 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 no= recommended.

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In addition, I=I 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.&=bsp; 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 shou=d be improved (it is criticized by the target group, inter alia, as no= adquately 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 + Afghanis=an, 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 =een fighting each other, but are here defending a prized transit route for mass=ve 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 militants groups for income.

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Polio incident: On Sat 14 February 2015, gunmen fired at a van carrying a polio vaccination te=m, killing the driver, as it was preparing for a 3-day PEP 16-18 February.&nbs=; 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 b= the militants. On the same day, a number of militants were killed by Pak forces in an adjacent FATA area, as Pak for=es 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 =he air above.

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Other polio-related recent attacks:

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