

The most wanted man in Iraq



HARUN UR RASHID

THE name, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, strikes fear in Iraq among the officials of the interim Iraqi government and the US authority. He has bounced out of relative obscurity this year. It seems that he is more menacing and dangerous than Osama Bin Laden.

The media almost daily mentions his name as the leader of the most feared militant group in Iraq. Whatever violent incidents, beheadings of hostages and kidnappings are happening in Iraq, one man is being accused of masterminding all these grisly occurrences, and he is Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi.

Who is this elusive man? These are the questions that agitate the minds of many Americans and others in many countries. Another interesting question is where is his hiding place in Iraq? Is he blamed for every atrocity in Iraq unnecessarily?

Very few facts are known about Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi. Hardly anyone knows what he really looks like. His height and weight are unknown to the CIA. One old passport-like picture is pasted up in Iraq: round face, furtive eyes, stubbled chin and beanie-like black cap on his head.

The US authorities have put \$25 million on his head. Interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi demanded his hand-over to Iraqi authorities from Falluja residents. If they would fail to do this, he would authorise US forces to bomb and destroy his hideout in Falluja, the Sunni stronghold, west of Baghdad. The Falluja residents found it impossible to do so because they did not know his whereabouts.

Whatever reports have been published, many believe that either his involvement is exaggerated or disproportionately magnified. There are many insurgents who are reportedly not linked with him in Iraq but all are grouped under him.

Brief profile

Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi is a born Jordanian. He was born as *Ahmad Fadil Al-Khalaylah* in village, called Al-Zarqa. He took a disguised name as Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi.

He is the "East Banker" in Jordanian parlance, because he came from the east bank of the Jordan river. He belonged to one of the powerful tribes that are "bedrock" of the Jordanian establishment – he was of the legendary *Beni Hassan* tribe that watched over Jordan's border with Iraq and had delivered



BOTTOM LINE

Al-Zarqawi has his own sophisticated public relations machine. The Al-Zarqawi profile is so great now that it does not matter how many of the charges against him are true. What does matter is that he is believed to become an inspirational figurehead for an insurgent army of about 20,000 fighters, called Tawhid Wa'Al-Jihad, that has been able to dig in, carrying out operations and keeping in tact the lines of funding and communication.

many national leaders, military officials, and intelligence agents.

His father was a community counselor from whom people sought advice. His father's early death led Al-Zarqawi to shoulder the responsibility for his mother and sisters. His mother died last year -- the only person he respected. He was known to be a restless child and left school early.

The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979 changed his life. He soon joined the Mujaheddin to fight against the Russians troops with the help of the CIA and Pakistan's intelligence agents. There are reports that Zarqawi fought in the sector of Khost and Herat, close to Iranian border. His mentor for a while was Palestinian fundamentalist Al-Magdisi, but he later fell out with him. Magdisi belonged to the "Salafi Movement" -- the credo of the fundamentalist Islamic warmongers that provides religious sanction for war in the name of Islam. This movement might have languished ineffectually on the fringes of world

affairs had not the CIA decided in the 1980s to pour billions of dollars in arms and support to a pan-Arabist army of volunteers. He justified his armed struggle against Russian troops on the grounds that all Muslims had a duty to repel the "infidel" Soviet invasion of Muslim Afghanistan.

Ideology

Like Osama Bin Laden, Al-Zarqawi's ideology is known to be based on Islamic orthodoxy. Al-Zarqawi believes that any departure from the orthodoxy is considered deviant behaviour and must be stamped out. His co-prisoners think that his ideology is narrow and limited. He had no interest in dialogue and compromise. Some say he is just like President Bush:

"You are with me or against me." He sees everything in black and white.

Do the threats against Islam come from non-Islamic countries? Or is there an internal threat to Islamic

purity in Muslim governments, be they tradition-based, like Saudi Arabia and Jordan, or puppet regimes installed by foreign force, as in Iraq and Afghanistan? He was opposed to the Saddam Hussein's Sunni regime because it was too secular for him.

Furthermore, he is not averse to breach Islamic convention that a Muslim should not act violently against another Muslim. He is anti-Shi'a and blames Iraq's fate on the treachery of Shi'ites, the majority of Iraq's population, for cooperating with the US.

His ideology differs from that of Osama Bin Laden. While Osama is against the US for helping the Saudi regime, Al-Zarqawi is against both foreign and Muslim regimes that do not adhere to his version of Islamic precepts.

While Osama has been a strategic planner for his followers, Al-Zarqawi not only plans but also executes the plan of actions. He is an ideologist, planner, and executioner -- all three in

one. Although the agenda of Osama Bin Laden differs from that of Al-Zarqawi, it has been reported recently that Al-Zarqawi has declared allegiance to Osama Bin Laden, saying it agrees with Al-Qaeda on strategy and the need for unity against the "enemies of Islam."

The wanderer

He was opposed to Jordanian monarchy. To him, the social and economic malaise in Jordan is due to departure of precepts of Islam. He condemned the government and branded the Sunni clerics as instruments of the corrupt Jordanian regime. He was arrested and was imprisoned in Jordan. In prison it is reported that he read and memorised the Holy Qu'ran. After release, he left for Afghanistan.

He returned to Jordan in 1992 and wanted to lead a family life selling vegetables and fruits. He wanted to buy a truck to do the business. But he failed to get the necessary paperwork for it. He became frustrated. There

are reports that Jordanian intelligence had a unit to monitor his activities and they reportedly blocked whatever Al-Zarqawi wanted to do. They wanted him to leave the country.

Al-Zarqawi came to Pakistan but was arrested because his visa ran out. He was jailed briefly and ordered to leave the country. He again returned to Jordan. When his life became intolerable, he left for Iraq and found himself in the midst of the insurgency. He cannot return to Jordan as he has been indicted in Jordan on charges of plotting a chemical attack that could have killed thousands of people.

Strategy

Once the militants defeated the mighty Soviet Union, they became more confident of victory of their ideology. The militant fighters, imbued by the zeal of Islamic fundamentalism and Wahabbism, have found a niche for themselves, first in Afghanistan under the US-backed Mujahedin, then under the Taliban, and now in Iraq.

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figurehead for an insurgent army of about 20,000 fighters, called *Tawhid Wa'Al-Jihad*, that has been able to dig in, carrying out operations and keeping in tact the lines of funding and communication. Many fear Iraq

may head for a bloody civil war. Al-Zarqawi's acts of violence in the past six months have taken him into lounge rooms of the world. Nobody, least of all the Americans, is sure of where he hides in Iraq. There has not been any confirmed sighting of Al-Zarqawi in Falluja.

Conclusion

Many political analysts say that in the 80s the last battle of the Cold War was fought in Afghanistan and it had been a significant factor in the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, otherwise it would have been on the fringe in world affairs. The US was determined that the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 not prevail and Islamic fundamentalists including the so-called "Arab Afghans" fought a proxy war, on behalf of the US and supported by Pakistan, to defeat the Soviet Union's occupation in Afghanistan.

There is another dimension to the story of Al-Zarqawi. It is noted that the World Bank's President James Wolfensohn has linked poverty with terrorism, although many in the West deny it. Al-Zarqawi appears to be a product of poverty, frustration, and militant Islam. The Al-Zarqawi story lends credence to Wolfensohn's views.

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Health policy and programme : The participatory approach

FARIDA SHAIKH

It was during the Mad Hatter's tea party that he said to Alice, "please have some more", to which Alice replied, "I haven't had any, so how can I have more." This was Lewis Carol, the mathematician writing under this pen name in Alice in Wonderland. The little girl was dreaming.

My attention is drawn to "For a more democratic health policy: issues and opportunities" (The Daily Star August 24, 2004). And on a similar note I ask how many people are more democratic before first being democratic? As Dr. Zakir Husain (the author of the piece) pointed out that all previous consultation with communities and stakeholders has been aimless and capricious. There was no connection between the beneficiaries and programme evaluation. Even with huge funding and investment, accountability and transparency remained minimal as to "who gets what and when" generally remained vague.

The current dialogue between the government and the development partners focus on funding mechanism for three years (2003-06) on Health Nutrition and Population Sector Programme (HNPS), previously the Health and Population Sector Programme (HPS). Nutrition is a central component of Health and Reproductive Health/Population. In 1997 Bangladesh National Food and Nutrition Policy was formulated.

Equally crucial for health reason is the provision of Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation. Was there a need to debate the issue of nutrition vis-à-vis safe drinking water and sanitation for inclusion in the health sector programme?

If there was such a need how and when did this happen?

The long term (2005-10) Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) is concerned with financial heads of programme over the five years period. On going discussion and consultation continues among development partners and between NGOs, professional and research organisations and members of civil society on various

programme options. However in this deliberation and dialogue, the deficiency of people's participation in terms of citizen's choice and concern, has been accurately noted by Dr. Rounaq Jahan 'Citizen's voice in health policy and programming' (The Daily Star, August 20, 2004).

There is no doubt that much more need to be heard from the citizenry. It is erroneous to suppose that policy and programme level is insulated and isolated from the general public. Top down and bottom up approach has become the development decorum. Communication, the flow of information needs to be both ways from the sender to the receiver and vice versa. And in this context it is a myth to suppose that the policy and programme formulation body is always the sender of information and the people at the grassroots the receiver. Field situation shows that the people at large are much more the appropriate source of learning.

In 1995 Government of Bangladesh endorsed a new planning process called the perspective planning process (PPP) covering a period of 15 years (1995-2010) the salient features of the process was its participatory bottom up approach involving the local people in plan (policy and programme) formulation. Much emphasis was given to investment by government and private sector to achieve sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. It provided an institutional framework at district level for programme implementation.

Also a major policy principle adopted by the National Health Policy was to involve the people in various processes of planning, management, local fund raising, spending, monitoring and review of the procedure of health service delivery. The aim was to decentralise the health management system and to establish people's rights and responsibilities in the system. Thus one of the policy strategies was to integrate the people and the local government with the health service system at all levels.

Government allocation of expenditure budget for health centres from



There is an urgent need to put our heads and hearts together in evolving a balanced strategy for health policy and programme that accommodates people's participation in terms of their expressed concern and interest and their appraisal of the end results. The dimension and the space of this framework must look to the future possibilities and requirements within the health sector.

the district to the community would be redistributed within reasonable flexibility. Such arrangement of expenditure fund, it was supposed, would net in the marginalised section of population. Moreover to provide coverage of the health service system to all citizens one community clinic would be established for every 6000 persons.

A committee comprising of health experts, social thinkers and national leaders was formed. These members then formed five separate sub-committees who prepared several reports to form a draft policy. One workshop was arranged between 15.03.98 and 29.03.98 in each of the six administrative divisions of Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Chittagong and Rajshahi to gather the opinion of the people from all occupations and strata on the draft of the National Health Policy.

Review of the list of participants is indicative of the cross section of local population who voiced their concern and shared their experiences in the policy formulation. Views of individuals and groups belonging to various segments of society was reflected. These included the day labourers, rickshaw-pullers, boatmen, local newsmen, a chronic patient who received frequent medical services, religious leaders, school teachers, male, female, eligible couple, husband, wife, University/college teacher, representatives of the private medical practitioners associations, representative of ayurvedic, unani and homeopathic federation, representatives of local chambers of commerce, NGO representative, principals of medical colleges, BMA representative, pharmacists, village doctors, nurses, midwives, civil surgeons, members of the parliament (party in power/in opposition),

health assistants, medical assistant, health inspectors, Thana Health and Family Planning officer, Thana Nirbahi Officer, Paurashava chairman, Union Parishad chairmen, Thana Family Planning officer, assistant Family Planning officer, family welfare assistant, family welfare visitor, Deputy Director of family planning, Divisional Director of Family Planning, Divisional Director of Health, and Divisional Commissioners.

During field visits comments, views, opinion, remarks, observations, judgement, impression, sentiment, and attitude of the people may be summarized as "...most often we give our opinion and views and share our concern and hope we have not seen nor heard anything done... according to what we said...or say.... what happens..... what do you all do with all this information?"

It is then necessary to seriously consider whether the citizen's voice was not heard, or what was said is lost, and there are no records/documentation. It may have been a convoluted communication channel in which the frequency and the wave length were not in unison. Is there a need for follow-up of divisional workshops to re-assess the situation and need to organise people's platform at district or upazila level?

Much more attention is required to be specific, simple and direct on health related subject matter for people's participation. Sufficient evidences from field situation are available to support that level of literacy is not always co-related with pragmatic proposals and plan of action. And those who are responsible for the plan and programme formulation may lack in capacity to

accommodate the voiced opinion and views of the people at large.

Experts, specialists, activists and field workers connected with the health sector programme are already familiar with the opinion and views of the people at large. However, if within the upcoming HPNSP and SIP were to propose activities which are a departure from the past, then it is mandatory to seek fresh opinion at the grassroots level preceded by communication to clarify the changes/modification. Communication material to support these remodeling need to be prepared and health educators positioned for dissemination of the health related information.

Just as people's participation is important during policy and programme formulation, it is equally important in the implementation phase, particularly in connection with monitoring of project activities, and evaluation after completion of activities.

The national monitoring agency IMED (is engaged in detail study on some 1200 projects annually) prepares review reports on seven major areas when a large project implementation is completed. One of the areas is benefit analysis, (cost benefit analysis) though this is not reflective of beneficiaries' participation in the project, specially in terms of health benefit. For a few selected projects IMED conducts ex-post evaluation. The Population Division Evaluation Unit/Planning Commission was transferred to IMED now undertakes this activity.

The responsibility for impact evaluation of projects rests with the administrative agency and the IMED, though it is supposed that there is a lacunae of skill and experience in this field. The development partners introduce their own monitoring and

evaluation system. Both (national and DP) these system operate independently though linkages do exist. However it is a matter of grave concern that "Government and development partners appear to lose interest during implementation." (R. Jahan/DS/August 20, 2004). This means that monitoring and evaluation is relegated to secondary position. The success of the project in terms of number of people who directly benefited usually is vague, as the beneficiaries are generally not asked, (Z.Husain/DS/Aug 28, 2004) and sometimes if they are asked it is in a casual manner, or with a close ended questions to some women participants who may vaguely know something or not know anything about the project.

Monitoring is carried out mainly through progress report which is prepared by the project management. (Generally the Project Director is too busy to do this work. It is prepared by the consultant. The beneficiaries' involvement depends on the consultant's field visit and interaction with the people at project site).

The planning wings of several ministries including Health Population and Family Welfare are understaffed and ill-equipped to carry out the planning, monitoring and evaluation functions effectively. Further the effectiveness of operational research for monitoring and evaluation of health programmes suffer due to inadequate budget allocation for research purposes in the various research institutions of the country.

Under the prevailing situation participatory monitoring would bridge the widening gap in monitoring and evaluation of health related projects, initially on selective basis, and

depending on the effectiveness and cost of the method it could be extended to more areas.

Participatory Monitoring is a much practiced management tool among the NGOs. Already civil society organisations have initiated monitoring through community based committees. Such milieu allows for continuous empowerment of the people. It is learning by doing. A sense of ownership begins to develop. More and more the members of the community take responsibility of what happens and the tendency to blame others begins to disappear.

Participatory monitoring is continuous observation, reflection and correction of action by the people themselves. It is easy and cost effective when people themselves observe what concerns them. When they note things that work out well, it motivates the people to continue, and when poor result are observed people reflect and

take steps to redress. All this may initially appear to be a time consuming process.

Thus there is an urgent need to put our heads and hearts together in evolving a balanced strategy for health policy and programme that accommodates people's participation in terms of their expressed concern and interest and their appraisal of the end results. The dimension and the space of this framework must look to the future possibilities and requirements within the health sector, reflective of past performances and the lessons learnt.

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How democratic is the American electoral system?

MOHAMMAD AMJAD HOSSAIN

THE electoral system in America tends to give the impression of being undemocratic in nature. The system of Electoral College has constantly been debated in different fora, including Congress, since the elections of 1800's when Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr of the Republican contesting for the post of President and Vice-President, respectively, ended up in a tie with John Adams and Charles Pinckney of the Federalist Party. It may be noted that the Federalist Party ultimately turned out to be the Democratic Party in America.

In view of the deadlock the matter was referred to the House of Representatives for resolving as a part of contingency election as mandated in the constitution. In the House of Representatives the Republicans voted for Thomas Jefferson while the Federalists cast votes in favour of Aaron Burr, which resulted in deadlock again. As the story goes, Alexander Hamilton of the Federalist Party had to succeed to overcome the deadlock in favour of Thomas Jefferson, who became the third president of the United States of America.

Constitutional amendment was made in 1840 on September 15 to prevent repetition of deadlock. Practically two party system has been introduced since then. The amendment, known as twelfth in the constitution, however, did not bring about qualitative change in electoral system.

The twelfth amendment was the significant constitutional amendment in the Electoral College in the history of America. However, the system in the



Since widely expressed opinion is in favour of abolition of Electoral College it would be wise for the Congress to abolish the system and hold the presidential elections under adult franchise in line with democratic norm and tradition, which will truly reflect the words of Abraham Lincoln: "... government of the people, by the people and for the people ..."

constitution to elect president actually undermines universal one man and one vote. A section of pundits, however, argued in favour of Electoral College as check and balance between popular vote and electoral vote. The twelfth amendment stipulates that "the electors shall meet in their respective states and vote by ballot for President and Vice-President, one of them at least shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves; they shall name in their ballots the person voted for as President, and in distinct ballots the person voted for as Vice-President, and of the number of votes for each, which lists they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, direct to the President of the Senate." President of the Senate is the Vice-President of the country.

Each State shall appoint, in such manner as the legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors, equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives to which the state may be entitled in the Congress; but no Senator or Representative, or person holding an office of trust or profit under the United States, shall be appointed an elector. Accordingly, 538 electors from 50 States plus District of Columbia will select President of the United States of America. A

Presidential candidate needs at least 270 votes of electors to win the election. The State of California has the highest number of electors (55). Interesting part of the Electoral College is the appointment and voting pattern of electors. The electors of President and Vice-President shall be appointed, in each State, on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November, in every fourth year. The electors shall meet and give their votes on the first Monday after the second Wednesday in December following their appointment in each State as the legislature of the State shall direct. Incidentally these electors are not elected people's representatives, but nominated by State legislature.

This system leaves enough scope to manipulate electors by the political parties in the elections. Also, they cast their votes after the country wide general elections on November 02 every fourth year. The election results could be torpedoed by Electoral College. There are many examples in America's history. In 1824, four candidates – Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams (son of John Adams), Henry Clay and William H. Crawford secured votes evenly. None received majority. The matter was referred to the House where contingency election took place. Representatives of the House voted in favour of Quincy

Adams despite Jackson's lead in both national and electoral votes. Jackson and his supporters criticised the election process as illegitimate and called for abolition of Electoral College. There was another disaster in 1876 election, which led to almost civil strife in the country as the Democrats began preparing Tilden-Hendricks Minute Men clubs arming with rifles after declared defeated in the Electoral College by one vote. The Democrat candidate was leading in national votes by wide margin against Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes.

Another crisis of the Electoral College emerged in 1888 elections when Benjamin Harrison won majority electoral votes defeating Grover Cleveland, who secured majority national popular votes. In 1960, John F. Kennedy, a Democrat, won the elections with electoral vote margin of 84 against Republican Richard Nixon. Americans unfortunately witnessed worst ever situation in the presidential elections of 2000 at the threshold of twenty-first century. Therefore, Electoral College vote overshadowed national popular votes resulting in reference to the House of Representatives for a decision.

In 2000 elections, Al-Gore, presidential candidate of the

Democratic Party was won popular vote by slim margin while George W. Bush of the Republican Party claimed winner in electoral votes. Since the results were not decisive, Representatives of the House voted to select presidential candidate while vote counting in Florida State became disputed.

This has become a serious constitutional crisis in America's history. American Congress possibly thought of such consequences 57 years back and made Automatic Succession Act of 1947 under which office of President goes to the Speaker of the House, then to the President pro tempore of the Senate and finally to various Cabinet officials in case both President and Vice-President do not qualify on the inaugural day. Therefore, Speaker of the House of Representatives J. Dennis Hastert had to assume office as Acting President of the United States of America. Our Future organisation's Robert Kutner focused on the Florida debacle of 2000 elections by saying that "the Republicans are also able to hold down the number of opposition votes, with complicity from Republican courts." It was amazing to witness that the general electoral college and elections in the House of Representatives (as contingency election) have

failed to produce elected President and Vice-President, which in fact resulted in the presidency being won by an individual, who did not contest.

It would be pertinent to quote from the book: The Electoral College Primer 2000 written by Professor Lawrence D. Langley of Lawrence University: "The presidency and the nation were transformed by these events – the presidency fatally weakened and made subservient to Congress for its determination and maintenance, and the nation traumatised and divided by months of political and constitutional crisis." Professor Langley became elector two times. As writer Andrew Busch pointed out "since 1797 over 700 constitutional amendments have been proposed in Congress to alter or abolish the Electoral College, and opinion polls over the last fifty years have consistently shown a majority of Americans favouring alternatives like direct popular election." But the system has been continuing unabated to the detriment of the democratic institution.

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