

NEWS ANALYSIS

al-Qaeda fails to get Somalia foothold

AFP, Paris

Osama bin Laden has long been drawn to Somalia as a potential al-Qaeda haven, but despite persistent efforts his influence in the lawless Horn of Africa country remains limited, experts say.

Although some factions were radicalised by the intervention of the Ethiopian army, which ended its two-year military occupation in January, the complex and challenging environment has persistently thwarted the call to jihad.

Last week, Somalia's President Sharif Aheikh Ahmed denounced calls by bin Laden for radical Islamists to overthrow him.

"It is not al-Qaeda that is teaching us the Islamic religion so we say 'don't interfere in our affairs'," he said.

Bin Laden had earlier urged headline Somali Islamists to topple the moderate Islamists in a message posted on the Internet.

But despite such factors "getting established in this region has never been easy for al-Qaeda," said Dominique Thomas, a specialist in radical Islam at France's School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS).

Thomas believes that although the state is almost entirely absent from some regions, religion is less important than in Afghanistan.

A report by the Combating Terrorism Center at the American West Point military academy agrees.

"The anarchic conditions in

Somalia that many believe serve al-Qaeda's purposes turned out to be as challenging for al-Qaeda as for the Western organisations seeking to help Somalia," it said.

"Foreign terrorists find remote zones in a state of collapse and armed conflict relatively inhospitable and challenging operating environments, not safe havens."

"Field reports are replete with complaints about poor food, unsafe water, uncomfortable shelter, heat, disease, biting insects, defective vehicles and poor tyres," it added.

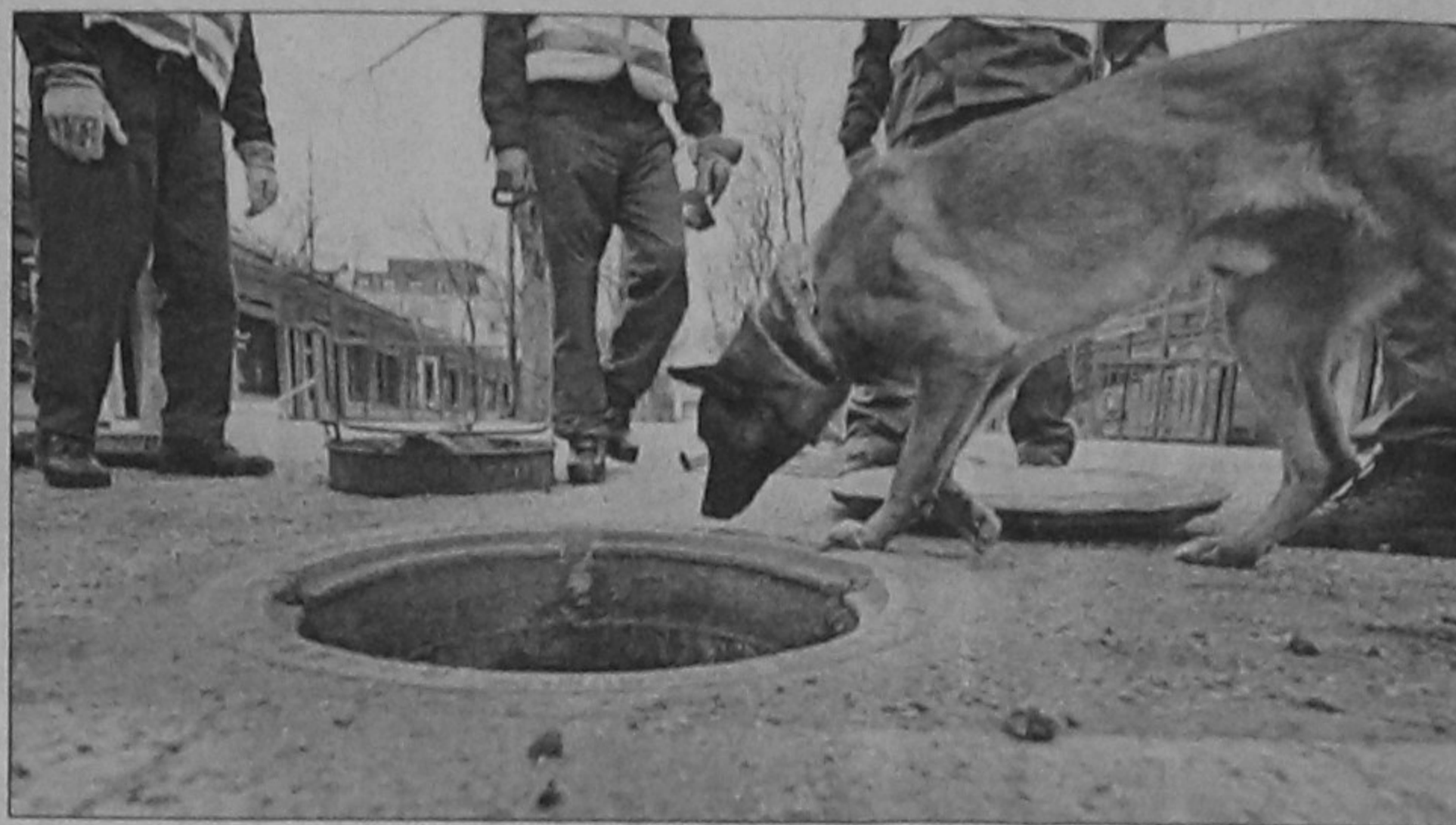
Ahmed was elected in January under a United Nations-mediated reconciliation deal.

His cabinet agreed to introduce Islamic law two days before the bin Laden tape was released last month. The president said the move would ensure that "he who claims that he is fighting to have sharia no longer has a reason to fight."

Islamist fighters including the home-grown Islamist Shebab militia have waged a bloody insurgency against the government and its allies since and before Ahmed came to power.

They have attracted a growing number of foreign fighters and Somalia is now estimated to shelter around 450 non-Somalian jihadists working with the Shebab.

French researcher Roland Marchal, a leading specialist on the region, says however that "as so often in Somalia, the reality is more nuanced and contradictory."



A policemen and a sniffer dog inspect a manhole before sealing it in Baden-Baden yesterday ahead of the upcoming NATO summit in Baden-Baden and Strasbourg. A massive security clampdown will go into effect late April 2 on the eve of the summit intended to mark the 60th anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation summit. Some 9,000 police are to be deployed in Strasbourg also at a site far from the city centre where anti-NATO protesters are gathering to stage an "alternative summit."

Netanyahu 'doesn't believe in peace': Abbas

AFP, Ramallah

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas said yesterday that Israel's new Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "does not believe in peace" and urged world leaders to pile pressure on him.

"Benjamin Netanyahu never believed in a two-state

solution or accepted signed agreements and does not want to stop settlement activity. This is obvious," Abbas told the official Palestinian news agency.

"We have to tell the world that this man does not believe in peace, so how should we deal with him? Let's put the ball in the world's court so that

it puts pressure on him and assumes its responsibilities."

Abbas's remarks came hours after Netanyahu was sworn in as prime minister at the helm of a right-wing government that has said it will hold talks with the Palestinians but is not committed to the two-state solution.

"We will carry out peace negotiations with the Palestinian Authority with a view to reaching a final accord," Netanyahu said Tuesday.

"Under the final accord, the Palestinians will have all the rights to govern themselves except those that can put in danger the security and existence of the state of Israel," he said.

The Palestinian Authority said Netanyahu's statements "mark a start that is not encouraging" and urged US President Barack Obama -- who has vowed to actively pursue peace talks -- to put pressure on Israel.

"The American administration should pressure the Netanyahu government to stick to the fundamentals of the peace process, in other words land for peace."



This handout picture provided by Prensa Sernado shows members of the Granaderos battalion escorting the coffin with the remains of Argentina's ex-president Raul Alfonsin (1983-1989) during his wake at the Salon Azul of the national Congress building in Buenos Aires yesterday. Alfonsin, who oversaw the country's return to democracy after the bloody 1976-1983 military dictatorship, has died from cancer at the age of 82.

17 die in militant attack on Afghan govt building

AP, Kandahar

Three Taliban suicide bombers disguised in army uniforms stormed a government office in southern Afghanistan yesterday after a fourth detonated a car bomb, officials said. At least 17 people including the four assailants died.

The Taliban claimed responsibility.

The coordinated assault in Kandahar underscored a new tactic by Afghan militants to launch multidirectional attacks against government offices. It mirrored a February attack in Kabul, where militants assaulted three government buildings simultaneously, killing 20.

Wednesday's attack on Kandahar's provincial council

office killed seven civilians and six police officers, President Hamid Karzai's office said. Ahmad Wali Karzai, the head of the council and President Karzai's brother, said the attack came during a meeting of tribal leaders. He said 17 people were wounded.

Among those killed were the province's education director and its deputy health director, Ahmad Wali Karzai said. The president's brother also said he left the council office about five minutes before the attack and was not harmed.

The assault comes amid a burst of violence in Afghanistan, where some 60 militants have died in battles the last three days. President Barack Obama who is deploying an additional 21,000 US forces to bolster the

record 38,000 already in the country has said the US will increase its focus on the "increasingly perilous" situation in Afghanistan.

The attack began just before noon, when a suicide bomber in a vehicle full of explosives blew himself up at the gates of the council office, opening the way for three other attackers in Afghan army uniforms to storm the building, said Ahmad Wali Karzai.

Karzai told The Associated Press that he was the target of the attack; he did not say how he knew he was the target.

After the car bomb explosion, three militants wearing suicide vests and carrying AK-47 assault rifles entered the compound, said Zemerri Bashary, the Interior Ministry's spokesman. Police killed two of the attackers and the third one blew himself up, Bashary said. A fourth bomber died in the car bomb, bringing the overall death toll to at least 14.

US to join UN Human Rights Council

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama's administration announced Tuesday it will run in May for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council -- a body shunned by his predecessor.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the US ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, said the United States wanted a seat to help reform the body from within.

Conservatives, who say the Geneva-based body routinely demonizes Israel but ignores human rights abuses elsewhere, were quick to criticize the move.

"This decision surrenders the strongest leverage we have to force changes in the council," Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, the top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said in a statement.

"Without reforms first... our participation would only grant legitimacy to the biased actions of a fundamentally illegitimate body."



Sarah Brown, (L) wife of British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, pours a pot of tea as she visits Maggie's Cancer Caring Centre in west London yesterday with US First Lady Michelle Obama (R). US President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown held talks at Downing Street Wednesday on the eve of a crucial G20 summit in London aimed at fixing the global economy.

Palestinian unity talks resume

AFP, Cairo

Rival Palestinian factions Fatah and Hamas resumed reconciliation talks in Cairo yesterday aimed at agreeing a government of national unity, acceptable to the international community.

The Egyptian-mediated talks between the Islamist Hamas and the Western-backed Fatah of Palestinian Authority president Mahmud Abbas were adjourned on

March 19 after failing to agree on a new government.

The two factions met on Wednesday in the presence of Egypt's intelligence chief and pointman for Israeli-Palestinian affairs Omar Suleiman, Egypt's official MENA news agency reported.

MENA quoted an unidentified senior Egyptian official calling on Fatah and Hamas to "face their responsibilities and rise above partisan (quarrels) and the fight for power."

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE FOR DUMB WAITER

1	Agency	ICDDR,B												
2	Procuring Entity Name	Executive Director, ICDDR,B												
3	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka												
4	Invitation for	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Dumb Waiter												
5	Invitation Ref No & Date	Memo No. ICDDR,B/Mohakhali/Gyanaloy/08/21 Date: September 01, 2008.												
6	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method.												
7	Budget and Source of Funds	IDA through RPA (GoB)												
8	Project (if applicable)	Strengthening of ICDDR,B Capacity for Improved Hospital Services at Mohakhali Campus under Vertical Extension and Renovation of Research and Hospital Building - ICDDR,B, Dhaka, Bangladesh												
9	Tender Package Number & Name	Package No.: 21 Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Dumb Waiter												
10	Tender Publication Date	April 02, 2009												
11	Tender Last Selling Date	May 14, 2009												
12	Tender Closing Date and Time	May 17, 2009 Time: 11:30 A.M												
13	Tender Opening Date and Time	May 17, 2009 Time: 12:00 Noon												
14	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address - Selling Tender Document Cash Counter, Treasury Unit, 2nd Floor, Hospital Building, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka. - Receiving Tender Document Procurement & Materials Office, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka. - Opening Tender Document Procurement & Materials Office, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka.												
15	Pre-Tender Meeting	Pre-Tender meeting will be held on April 29, 2009 at 10.00 AM in the Finance Conference Room, Procurement & Materials Unit, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka.												
16	Eligibility of Tenderer	(i) The tenderers shall be Manufacturer / Supplier from eligible source countries and Authorized Local Agent can Bid on their behalf. (ii) Manufacturer/authorized local agent must have credit line facilities/liquid asset of at least Tk. (BDT) 10 (ten) lacs supported by documentary evidence. (iii) Authorized Local Agent must have physical facilities to provide after sale services during and after the warranty period.												
17	Identification of Lots, Tender Security, Completion Time and Price of Tender Document	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Pkg. No.</th> <th>Identification</th> <th>Location</th> <th>Tender Security Amount</th> <th>Completion Time/ Validity of Contract</th> <th>Price of Tender Document (in cash)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pkg-21</td> <td>Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Dumb Waiter</td> <td>ICDDR,B 68, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212</td> <td>Tender Security amount in BDT 60 (sixty) thousand or equivalent foreign currency by pay order or Bank Guarantee</td> <td>6 Months</td> <td>BDT. 500.00 or Equivalent foreign currency</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Pkg. No.	Identification	Location	Tender Security Amount	Completion Time/ Validity of Contract	Price of Tender Document (in cash)	Pkg-21	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Dumb Waiter	ICDDR,B 68, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212	Tender Security amount in BDT 60 (sixty) thousand or equivalent foreign currency by pay order or Bank Guarantee	6 Months	BDT. 500.00 or Equivalent foreign currency
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18	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Abu Masum												
19	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Manager, Procurement												
20	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Gyanaloy Project, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka, Bangladesh.												
21	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel: (8802)8860523-32 Fax: (8802)9860620 e-mail: masum@icddr.org Ext. 3735												
22	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.													
23	Special Instruction :- a) The Tenderer may submit Tender on the basis of Design supplied with this Tender Documents or if prefers on the basis of Tenderer's Own Design. b) In case of Tender on the basis of Tenderer's Own Design, the Tenderer has to submit Detail Design, Drawings along with the Tender. c) All activities in connection with the said procurement of goods & related services will be guided as per rule of 'The Public Procurement Rules 2008'. d) If it is not possible to receive & open the tender on the schedule date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received and opened on the following working day at same time and same place.													

RE-TENDER NOTICE (2nd CALL)

1	Agency	ICDDR,B												
2	Procuring Entity Name	Executive Director, ICDDR,B												
3	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka												
4	Invitation for	Supply, Design, Erection, Construction and Finishing of Light Steel Structure for roofing with Ancillary Works over BSL-3 Lab Roof												
5	Invitation Ref No & Date	Memo No. ICDDR,B/Mohakhali/Procurement/08/09/37(Re-tender) Date: March 12, 2009												
6	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method												
7	Budget and Source of Funds	IDA through RPA (GoB)												
8	Project (if applicable)	Vertical Extension and Renovation of Research and Hospital Building - ICDDR,B, Dhaka, Bangladesh												
09	Tender Package Number & Name	Package No. 37, Supply, Design, Erection, Construction and Finishing of Light Steel Structure for roofing with Ancillary Works over BSL-3 Lab Roof.												
10	Tender Publication Date	April 02, 2009												
11	Tender Last Selling Date	April 16, 2009												
12	Tender Closing Date and Time	April 19, 2009 Time: 11:30 Hours												
13	Tender Opening Date and Time	April 19, 2009 Time: 12:00 Hours												
14	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address - Selling Tender Document Treasury Unit, 2nd floor, Hospital Building, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka. - Receiving Tender Document Procurement & Materials Office, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka. - Opening Tender Document Procurement & Materials Office, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka.												
15	Pre-tender Meeting	Pre-tender meeting will be held on April 09, 2009 at 11:00 A.M in the Finance Conference Room, Procurement & Materials Office, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka.												
16	Eligibility of Tenderer	i. The Tenderer should have minimum 3 years of general experience in the supply & erection of steel structure roofing. ii. Enlisted in Govt / Semi- Govt/ Autonomous organization having experience in similar nature of supply and erection of Light Steel Structure roofing works. iii. Certificate regarding satisfactory completion of at least one number of Supply, Design, Erection, Construction and Finishing of Light Steel Structure with Ancillary Roofing Works under Govt / Semi- Govt/ Autonomous organization minimum single work order Tk 10 lakh from the concerned authority. iv. Bank Solvency Certificate in terms of credit line or liquid asset of at least 10 lakh.												
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