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**From:** sbwhoeop [redacted]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 5, 2009 10:18 AM  
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**Subject:** FYI: has some valuable info on af/pak. Sid

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[http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/Analysis/2009/11/04/Commentary-Warlords-R-Us/UPI-16551257351379/](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Analysis/2009/11/04/Commentary-Warlords-R-Us/UPI-16551257351379/)

## Commentary: Warlords R Us

By ARNAUD DE BORCHGRAVE  
UPI Editor at Large

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4 (UPI) -- If we are successful beyond President Obama's wildest dreams -- e.g., the Taliban is wiped out and a tough new Afghan government does not allow al-Qaida or other terrorists to conspire against us on their territory -- would that make us safer from radical Islam? The answer, of course, is no, because this is not about geography. Two veteran intelligence operatives with much Middle Eastern and Afghan experience, speaking not for attribution, agreed a stable, secure Afghanistan doesn't change the equation, at least not significantly.

The popular perception of al-Qaida in Afghanistan is the same propaganda news clip, shown a gazillion times over the last eight years, replete with terrorist "trainees" in shalwar-kameez (knee-length shirts over baggy pantaloons) running through obstacle courses and emerging from tunnels, presumably to kill us all in our beds. Al-Qaida doesn't need commando-steeled volunteers to attack the United States and its allies. For the next Sept. 11, the chances are they have already selected highly motivated, brainwashed wackjobs among the graduates of Pakistan's madrassas, who look forward to a one button push to the land of plenty in the sky where 72 impatient maidens await their arrival. Al-Qaida's "martyrs" don't need Afghan training camps for WMD terrorism. In fact, to be inconspicuous, they should not have the physique of an avoid-at-all-cost likely to arouse suspicion.

Al-Qaida does not need Afghanistan for its next terrorist objective. In fact, those who follow events in Afghanistan closely were taken aback when Obama said Afghanistan was a war of necessity because that's where al-Qaida is. They haven't been there since Afghanistan was liberated in October 2001. They moved to Pakistan's tribal areas where they attracted volunteers from the Middle East and Europe. When a reconstituted Taliban insurgent force re-entered Afghanistan in large numbers in 2004, al-Qaida was not interested in its now insecure old training camps. Even if Pakistan's current offensive against the Taliban and al-Qaida in the tribal areas is successful, al-Qaida is not an entity that can be captured or destroyed. Its clandestine operatives are widely scattered in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, North and South America.

As alternatives to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Yemen, in the vernacular of the intelligence community, will do/is doing it. Somalia will do/is doing it. West African states whose writ doesn't extend much beyond their capitals will do/are doing it. Grimy North African suburbs of major French cities will do/are doing it. British provincial towns with Pakistani enclaves will do/are doing it. And the Internet's thousands of pro-al-Qaida Web sites will do/are doing it.

Osama bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri are believed to be comfortably installed in a tribal chief's compound somewhere near Quetta, the capital of Pakistan's constantly rebellious Baluchistan province, which

has 48 percent of the country's land with only 10 million of its 175 million people. There is no al-Qaida central issuing orders to thousands of adherents the world over.

If there is no connection between Afghanistan and the core problem of "no more Sept. 11s," what are the United States and 41 friendly nations doing there? Even in the event of a Taliban victory in the years to come, the Taliban would not be stupid enough to invite al-Qaida back. Three months prior to Sept. 11, 2001, there was palpable tension between Taliban leader Mullah Omar and bin Laden. Omar complained that bin Laden was issuing "too many fatwas (religious edicts) which he has no business doing as he didn't complete his religious education." Omar also prevented journalists from seeing bin Laden. The Taliban leader knows he lost power and his country because of what bin Laden and his terrorists did to the United States.

In today's Afghanistan almost everything turns out to be corruption and mismanagement. The average citizen has seen little benefit from expenditures in the \$250 billion range -- on top of \$1 trillion in Iraq. The U.S. effort has been plagued by fraud, laced with mismanagement and bereft of strategic focus. One example among many others came in 2007 when the United States awarded a massive contract worth some \$300 million to AEY, a Florida-based company, to supply the Afghan army with 52 types of ammo, chiefly bullets for AK-47s. All requirements for safety inspections, mandatory for all ammo delivered to U.S. forces, were removed. Thus AEY was able to shop around in Eastern Europe for the cheapest ammo available. Millions of rounds of old Chinese ammo made in the 1960s turned out to be substandard and dangerous.

The State Department was aware of what was going on but did not object as speed was the only criterion. AEY and its officers were eventually indicted in Florida. But U.S. officials involved got off with a slap on the wrist. Wherever U.S. inspectors look, they find fraud and abuse. There are even cases -- reported by GlobalPost reporter Jean Mackenzie -- of American contractors paying bribes to the Taliban to ensure aid projects are not disrupted. This is a recipe for a war without end. She also reports a disguised Taliban office in Kabul that reviews all aid projects and determines the amount to be paid to the Taliban.

If true, the United States is paying the Afghan government to fight the Taliban while also paying the Taliban to fight the Afghan government.

The key lies in Pakistan. Almost all terrorist trails in Europe lead back to Pakistan -- and its madrassas. These are the free Koranic schools that have stepped into the vacuum of no education system for the poor as the military takes up 50 percent of government revenue. A fraction of what the United States has spent in Iraq and Afghanistan would go a long way to turning Pakistan around. Instead, Congress, in its infinite wisdom, after authorizing \$1.2 trillion in both wars allocated \$7.5 billion to Pakistan over five years -- with umpteen caveats. In a country of 175 million, a drop in the proverbial bucket.