

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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Subject: Fw: Saudi Arabia, UAE funded jihadi networks in Pakistan-WikiLeaks (Reuters)

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Subject: Saudi Arabia, UAE funded jihadi networks in Pakistan-WikiLeaks (Reuters)

May 22 (Reuters) - Islamic charities from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates financed a network in U.S. ally Pakistan that recruited children as young as eight to wage holy war, a local newspaper reported on Sunday, citing Wikileaks.

A U.S. diplomatic cable published by WikiLeaks said financial support estimated at \$100 million a year was making its way from those Gulf Arab states to a jihadist recruitment network in Pakistan's Punjab province, Dawn newspaper reported.

The November 2008 dispatch by Bryan Hunt, the then principal officer at the U.S. consulate in Lahore, was based on discussions with local government and non-governmental sources during trips to Punjab, Pakistan's most populous province.

It said those sources claimed that financial aid from Saudi and United Arab Emirates was coming from "missionary" and "Islamic charitable" organisations ostensibly with the direct support of those countries' governments.

Saudi Arabia, the United States and Pakistan heavily supported the Afghan mujahideen against Soviet occupation troops in the 1980s.

Militancy subsequently mushroomed in the region and militants moved to Pakistan's northwest tribal areas along the border with Afghanistan, seen as a global hub for militants.

Since then there has been a growing nexus between militant groups there and in Punjab. In recent years militants have been carrying out suicide bombings seemingly at will in Pakistan, despite military offensives against their strongholds.

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