

*Haqqani Network*

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**Name:** Haqqani Network

**Type of Organization:**

- Insurgent
- non-state actor
- regional
- terrorist
- transnational
- violent

**Ideologies and Affiliations:**

- Deobandi
- Islamist
- jihadist
- Pashtun
- Salafist
- Sunni
- Wahhabi

**Place of Origin:**

Afghanistan

**Year of Origin:**

1996

**Founder(s):**

Jalaluddin Haqqani

**Places of Operation:**

Afghanistan and Pakistan

**Overview**

*Executive Summary:*

The Haqqani network is a militant Islamist group operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is considered a branch of the Afghan Taliban, but operates independently from the organization and has a more diffuse command structure.<sup>1</sup> It originated in the late 1970s but rose to prominence in the resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s. After the 1989 Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, Jalaluddin Haqqani formed an alliance with the Taliban and supported the growth of al-Qaeda. When the Taliban violently assumed de facto control of Afghanistan in 1996, the group appointed Haqqani as minister of tribal affairs.<sup>2</sup> Ever since, the Haqqani network has been subsumed under the larger Taliban, although the Haqqanis preserve distinct command and control.<sup>3</sup> In December 2018, three representatives of the Haqqani Network accompanied the Taliban delegation to the Pakistan-sponsored peace talks between the Taliban and United States held in the United Arab Emirates.<sup>4</sup>

Since the Taliban regime's overthrow in 2001, the Haqqani network has been a lethal and sophisticated arm of the Afghan insurgency against the Western-backed government in Kabul. The Haqqani network's base of operations is located near Miramshah, in North Waziristan, part of Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).<sup>5</sup> Although it has cooperated with and even praised al-Qaeda, the Haqqani network focus is regional, not global like al-Qaeda's. Indeed, according to declassified U.S. intelligence, the Haqqanis enjoyed close ties with the United States from the time of anti-Soviet jihad in the 1980s until September 11, 2001.<sup>6</sup>

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Jalaluddin Haqqani and his Islamist fighters received considerable military assistance from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during the anti-Soviet struggle.<sup>7</sup> In July 2015, a senior member of the Haqqani network claimed that its founder, Jalaluddin Haqqani, had been dead for more than a year. Neither U.S. intelligence nor the Taliban confirmed his death.<sup>8</sup> Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency has also given extensive support, including safe harbor and access to weapons, to the Haqqani network, enabling the group to expand. However, the Afghan government and coalition forces have inflicted great damage on the Haqqani network in recent years, bringing its total force size down from as many as 10,000 in 2011 to as few as 2,000 in 2012.<sup>9</sup>

Since the network's leader, Jalaluddin Haqqani, grew ill, his son Sirajuddin became the operational director of the organization, enhancing its cooperation with al-Qaeda and other violent Islamist groups in the region.<sup>10</sup> The Taliban reported Jalaluddin Haqqani's death in September 2018, but observers did not expect Haqqani's death to have an impact on the group's operations.<sup>11</sup> The U.S. intelligence community regards the Haqqani network as the leading insurgency force in South Asia, with more intimate ties to Arab jihadist groups and Pakistani intelligence than any other faction.<sup>12</sup> In 2011, Admiral Mike Mullen, then-chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, called the Haqqanis a "veritable arm" of the ISI.<sup>13</sup>

### *Doctrine:*

The Haqqani network seeks to establish an Islamic state in Pakistan and Afghanistan and build a caliphate under Islamic law. Like the Taliban, the Haqqani network endorses an austere and radical interpretation of sharia (Islamic law), positing that Muslims must aspire to live in accordance with the actions of the *Salaf*, the first generation of Muslim leaders after the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>14</sup>

The Haqqani network gained momentum during the Soviet occupation and came to play a central role in the Afghan mujahideen movement. Like the Taliban, they embrace a strict interpretation of Sunni Islam known as Deobandi.<sup>15</sup> This school of thought was a branch of Hanafi Islam that developed in the late nineteenth century in the madrassas (religious schools) of the Indian subcontinent.<sup>16</sup> What set the Deobandis apart was their habit of instructing youth in Islamic theology and little else. They strove to inculcate students with a fierce respect for piety. This rigorous instruction turned out pious Muslims who were able to recite the Quran and aimed to adhere as closely as possible to the lived experience of Islam's prophet Muhammad as revealed in the Hadith (the sayings and actions of Muhammad). The Deobandis' vision put faith at the center of life, drawing a stark distinction between the *kuffar* (unbelievers) and the *ummah* (community of believers).<sup>17</sup>

After seizing power in Kabul in 1996, the Taliban announced its aims to impose order and enforce sharia. All this was done to defend the special Islamic character of the "Emirate of Afghanistan."<sup>18</sup> The Taliban banned most sporting events and forms of entertainment, from poetry and music to kites. They closed all-girls schools, and women were allowed in public only under strict male supervision. Even when women were in the home, the windows were painted black to prevent passersby from glimpsing women in their private quarters.<sup>19</sup>

In 2008, Jalaluddin Haqqani stated that "all the Mujahideen wage Jihad under the leadership of [Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar] against the American invaders and their lackeys."<sup>20</sup> In September 2012, Haqqani's son Sirajuddin declared, "We are one of the fronts of the Islamic Emirate... and we are proud of our pledge to its Emir [Mullah Omar] and we carry out its orders and all its regulations... and we obey completely in good deeds the Emir of the Believers Mullah Muhammad Omar."<sup>21</sup> The Taliban even released a statement on its website stating that there is "no separate entity or network in Afghanistan by the name of Haqqani" and that Jalaluddin Haqqani is "a member of the Leadership Council of Islamic Emirate and is a close, loyal and trusted associate" of Mullah Omar.<sup>22</sup> In August 2015, the Taliban appointed Sirajuddin Haqqani as a deputy to Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mohammed Mansour, further integrating the Haqqani network into the Taliban.<sup>23</sup>

No events since have altered the Haqqani network's pledge of allegiance to the Taliban. With the rise of ISIS, for instance, the Haqqani network has fallen in line with its Taliban and al-Qaeda allies in calling for pan-Islamic unity. The Taliban has advised ISIS to "avoid extremism" that risks splintering the violent Islamist movement across the broader Middle East.<sup>24</sup> Despite these warnings, hundreds of Taliban members have joined ISIS's Pakistani branch and some evidence indicates that ISIS's ranks are growing throughout the Hindu Kush.<sup>25</sup>

### *Organizational Structure:*

The Haqqani network's leadership is largely clan-based and hierarchical. It is located near Miramshah, in North Waziristan, part of Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).<sup>26</sup> Although the Haqqani network has been responsible for some of the most gruesome violence in Afghanistan and Pakistan in recent years, Pakistani intelligence has nonetheless labeled it as a potential partner in peace—a "moderate" Taliban.

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The Haqqani network's leadership structure is akin to the Taliban's former 10-member leadership council (Supreme Shura) previously based in Kandahar.<sup>28</sup> Jalaluddin Haqqani served as the minister of "Frontier Affairs" in the Taliban's Supreme Shura until the regime was deposed by the U.S.-led intervention in 2001. Ever since, the Taliban have operated as an insurgent force out of Pakistan under its modified Quetta Shura, a combination of the leadership and consultative councils. This more recent form of leadership was founded in the winter of 2002, when Mullah Omar fled across the Pakistani frontier.<sup>29</sup> The Quetta Shura is responsible for much of the Taliban's operations in southern and western Afghanistan.<sup>30</sup> As of 2009, the Shura consisted of an estimated 23 to 46 members.<sup>31</sup>

The Quetta Shura appoints a governing structure in Afghanistan, dispatching "shadow" governors to many Afghan provinces.<sup>32</sup> In 2009, it established a committee to redress grievances from the indigenous population. The Quetta Shura "[installs] 'shari'a' courts to deliver swift and enforced justice in contested and controlled areas. [It levies] taxes and [conscripts] fighters and laborers." It claims "to provide security against a corrupt government, ISAF forces, criminality, and local power brokers [and] to protect Afghan and Muslim identity against foreign encroachment."<sup>33</sup>

The Taliban also operates a military base in Peshawar, Pakistan, from which leaders direct the insurgency in Afghanistan's north and east. The Peshawar military commission reportedly oversees a total of 20 provinces, divided into six command zones, one of which falls under the Haqqani network's purview.<sup>34</sup>

The Haqqani network's Miramshah Shura, its most direct leadership organ, features both military and political wings and consists of Haqqani family members along with veteran commanders trusted by the family.<sup>35</sup> As of 2015, Sirajuddin Haqqani leads the Miramshah Shura and is the chief liaison to the Quetta Shura as well as the Pakistani Taliban and al-Qaeda.<sup>36</sup> According to the Council on Foreign Relations, the Haqqani network has been critical in building and maintaining this insurgency infrastructure on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistani border. It operates as a conduit between the Afghan Taliban and Pakistani intelligence, along with al-Qaeda and other insurgent groups.<sup>37</sup>

Following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, the Taliban announced the appointments to their caretaker government on September 7, 2021. At the helm of the movement is Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada who will serve as supreme leader. Mullah Muhammad Hassan was named the acting prime minister, with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi named deputy prime ministers. The top security post was given to Sirajuddin Haqqani, who will serve as acting minister of the interior, a role in which he will have extensive authority over policing and legal matters. Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqoob, who is the oldest son of Taliban founder Mullah Muhammad Omar, was named the acting defense minister. Khalil Haqqani, who was the self-appointed chief of security for Kabul following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, was named minister for refugees. The government is exclusively male, with many positions filled with veterans from their hardline movement in the early nineties.<sup>38</sup>

### *Financing:*

The Haqqani network has long been financed by its local allies, ranging from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to the Taliban and al-Qaeda.<sup>39</sup> The group also receives funding from wealthy donors across the Arab world, especially in the Gulf states. These associations have been deeply entrenched since at least 1980, when Jalaluddin Haqqani—with the help of one of his Arab wives living in the United Arab Emirates—opened fundraising offices in several Gulf states.<sup>40</sup> Jalaluddin Haqqani's sons have personally traveled to meet these patrons on several occasions.<sup>41</sup>

The Haqqani network also boasts a range of criminal enterprises, from smuggling jewels and precious metals to kidnapping.<sup>42</sup> It also operates legitimate commercial enterprises, especially ones tied to Pakistan's military and intelligence elite.<sup>43</sup>

### *Recruitment:*

The Haqqani network runs an elaborate network of madrassas in North Waziristan, from which they cull members.<sup>44</sup> It has also used the Taliban's larger network of Saudi-funded Wahhabi madrassas to find new recruits.<sup>45</sup> These religious schools can be found on both sides of the Durand line, and represent the primary recruiting grounds for the Taliban as well.<sup>46</sup>

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Several of the Haqqani Network's and Taliban's leaders, including Sirajuddin Haqqani, studied at Pakistani cleric Maulana Sami ul Haq's officially-sanctioned seminary in Pakistan.<sup>47</sup> Haq, known as the "father of the Taliban," was killed in a knife attack in his home in Pakistan on November 2, 2018.<sup>48</sup>

### *Training:*

The Haqqani network is known to train its fighters in camps on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistani border. According to U.S. intelligence, for instance, a 2011 training video put out by the Haqqani network was recorded in Pakistan's tribal-controlled North Waziristan.<sup>49</sup> This video features Haqqani recruits enrolled in a kind of basic training course replete with mock ambushes, other simulated other battlefield conditions, and weapons training.

In 2011, the Haqqani network released a field manual of its training methods and tactics.<sup>50</sup> The field manual runs 144 pages, and was published under "Khalifa Sirajuddin Haqqani," the operational commander of the Haqqani network. It details methods to obtain financing and directs readers to recruit and train new members. It also documents ambush methods, explosives, and instructions for suicide missions. Further, it features religious propaganda and praise for al-Qaeda.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "Part 3: Through the eyes of the Taliban," Asia Times Online, May 5, 2004, [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central\\_Asia/FE05Ag02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/FE05Ag02.html).

<sup>3</sup> "The Haqqani Network," Institute for the Study of War, accessed April 20, 2015, <http://www.understandingwar.org/report/haqqani-network>.

<sup>4</sup> Kathy Gannon, "Taliban say talks focused on US withdrawal from Afghanistan," Associated Press, December 19, 2018, <https://www.apnews.com/61121b245e9d4432b911df7004b6d4da>.

<sup>5</sup> Anand Gopal, "The Most Deadly US Foe in Afghanistan," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 1, 2009, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2009/0601/p10s01-wosc.html>.

<sup>6</sup> "Blacklisted," *Economist*, September 15, 2012, <http://www.economist.com/node/21562974>.

<sup>7</sup> Jason Ukman, "The Haqqani Network: al Qaeda's Dangerous Patron," *Washington Post*, July 11, 2008, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/checkpoint-washington/post/al-qaedas-dangerous-haqqani-patron-in-pakistan/2011/07/18/gIQAAtWmcLI\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/checkpoint-washington/post/al-qaedas-dangerous-haqqani-patron-in-pakistan/2011/07/18/gIQAAtWmcLI_blog.html).

<sup>8</sup> Matthew Rosenberg and Ihsanullah Tipu Mehsud, "Founder of Haqqani Network Is Long Dead, Aide Says," *New York Times*, July 31, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/01/world/asia/founder-of-haqqani-network-died-nearly-a-year-ago-member-says.html>.

<sup>9</sup> "Mapping Militant Organizations," Stanford University, last modified May 15, 2015, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/363>.

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<sup>11</sup> Kathy Gannon, "Death of Afghan group's founder unlikely to weaken militants," Associated Press, September 4, 2018, [https://www.apnews.com/be6aab352110497696ddc9a01f3bf693/Taliban:-Founder-of-Haqqani-network-dies-inside-Afghanistan?utm\\_campaign=SocialFlow&utm\\_medium=AP&utm\\_source=Twitter](https://www.apnews.com/be6aab352110497696ddc9a01f3bf693/Taliban:-Founder-of-Haqqani-network-dies-inside-Afghanistan?utm_campaign=SocialFlow&utm_medium=AP&utm_source=Twitter).

<sup>12</sup> Anand Gopal, "The Most Deadly US Foe in Afghanistan," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 1, 2009, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2009/0601/p10s01-wosc.html>.

<sup>13</sup> "Blacklisted," *Economist*, September 15, 2012, <http://www.economist.com/node/21562974>.

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<sup>16</sup> "Deobandis," Oxford Islamic Studies Online, accessed May 1, 2015, [http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e522?\\_hi=1&\\_pos=2](http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e522?_hi=1&_pos=2).

<sup>17</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 88.

<sup>18</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 22.

<sup>19</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 90.

<sup>20</sup> "The Haqqani Network," Institute for the Study of War, accessed April 20, 2015, <http://www.understandingwar.org/report/haqqani-network>.

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<sup>22</sup> Bill Roggio, "Haqqani Network is part of the Taliban- Siraj Haqqani," *Long War Journal*, October 5, 2012, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/10/siraj\\_haqqani\\_denies.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/10/siraj_haqqani_denies.php).

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<sup>25</sup> Mushtaq Yusufzai, "ISIS in Pakistan and Afghanistan: Taliban Fighters Sign up, Commanders Say," NBC News, January 31, 2015, <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/isis-pakistan-afghanistan-taliban-fighters-sign-commanders-say-n296707>.

<sup>26</sup> Anand Gopal, "The Most Deadly US Foe in Afghanistan," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 1, 2009, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2009/0601/p10s01-wosc.html>.

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**Key Leaders**



**Jalaluddin Haqqani**

Founder of the Haqqani network  
(deceased)



**Sirajuddin Haqqani**

Reported deputy emir; head of the  
Quetta Shura; interior minister of  
the Taliban government



**Abdul Aziz Ahbasin**

Haqqani network governor of  
Pakista province, Afghanistan



**Khalil al-Rahman Haqqani**

Acting minister for refugees for the  
Taliban government



## *Haqqani Network*

### History:

- **July 31, 2022:** A CIA drone strike kills al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri at a Haqqani safe house in Kabul's Sherpooor area. According to U.S. President Joe Biden, Zawahiri had been staying in the house that had been targeted. The house reportedly belonged to a top aide to Sirajuddin Haqqani. After the strike, Haqqani network members allegedly work to conceal Zawahiri's former presence at the house and move Zawahiri's wife, his daughter, and her children to another location. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid condemns the strike as a violation of "international principles." Sources: Matthew Lee, Nomaan Merchant, Mike Balsamo, and James Laporta, "Biden: Drone strike on al-Qaeda leader delivered 'justice,'" Associated Press, August 1, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/ayman-al-zawahiri-al-qaeda-terrorism-biden-36e5f10256c9bc9972b252849eda91f2>; "Background Press Call by a Senior Administration Official on a U.S. Counterterrorism Operation," White House, August 1, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2022/08/01/background-press-call-by-a-senior-administration-official-on-a-u-s-counterterrorism-operation/>.
- **November 30, 2021:** Reports emerge that militants loyal to the Taliban and the Haqqani Network had embedded themselves within the Afghan government for years prior to the Taliban's August takeover of Afghanistan. As the United States completed its withdrawal, these sleeper agents revealed themselves and used hidden weapons to aid the Taliban takeover. According to Mawlawi Mohammad Salim Saad, a senior Taliban leader and member of the Haqqani Network's Badri force, the Taliban "had agents in every organization and department." Source: Yaroslav Trofimov and Margherita Stancati, "Taliban Covert Operatives Seized Kabul, Other Afghan Cities From Within," *Wall Street Journal*, November 28, 2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/taliban-covert-operatives-seized-kabul-other-afghan-cities-from-within-11638095401>.
- **November 7, 2021:** The Taliban government appoints Haqqani member Haji Mali Khan to govern Afghanistan's Logar province. Source: Bill Roggio, "Top Haqqani Network leader named Taliban governor of Logar," *Long War Journal*, November 10, 2021, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2021/11/top-haqqani-network-leader-named-taliban-governor-of-logar.php>.
- **October 18, 2021:** Sirajuddin Haqqani meets with the families of deceased suicide bombers at Kabul's Intercontinental Hotel. Haqqani praises the bombers as "heroes of Islam and the country." Source: "US-Wanted Taliban Leader Praises Suicide Bombers, Doles Out Rewards to Heirs," *Voice of America*, October 19, 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-wanted-taliban-leader-praises-suicide-bombers-doles-out-rewards-to-heirs-6277407.html>.
- **September 7, 2021:** The Taliban announces appointments to their caretaker government of Afghanistan. At the helm of the movement is Haibatullah Akhundzada, who will serve as supreme leader. Mullah Muhammad Hassan is named the acting prime minister, with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi named deputy prime ministers. The top security post was given to Sirajuddin Haqqani, who will serve as acting minister of the interior, a role in which he will have extensive authority over policing and legal matters. Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqoob, who is the oldest son of Taliban founder Mullah Muhammad Omar, is named the acting defense minister. The government is exclusively male, with many positions filled with veterans from their hardline movement in the early nineties. Sources: Matthieu Aikins and Jim Huylebroek, "Taliban Appoint Stalwarts to Top Government Posts," *New York Times*, September 7, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/07/world/asia/taliban-women-protest-kabul-afghanistan.html>; Kathy Gannon, "Taliban form all-male Afghan government of old guard members," *Associated Press*, September 8, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-pakistan-afghanistan-arrests-islamabad-d50b1b490d27d32eb20cc11b77c12c87>.
- **August 20, 2021:** Following the Taliban's takeover of the Afghan government on August 15, 2021, on August 20, Khalil Haqqani lands in Kabul where he—along with other senior members of the Haqqani network—is put in charge of security for the capital city. Upon his arrival, Haqqani delivers remarks at the Pul-i-Khishti Mosque, where he announces, "our first priority for Afghanistan is security... We will give security, then we will give economy, trade, education for men and women. There will be no discrimination." Additionally, Haqqani tells media sources that he had been consulting with Abdullah Abdullah, the chairman of Afghanistan's National Reconciliation Council, and former president of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai. Sources: Ali M Latifi, "'All Afghans' should feel safe under Taliban, says security chief," *Al Jazeera*, August 22, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/22/all-afghans-should-feel-safe-under-taliban-says-security-chief>; Ken Dilanian, "New Taliban head of security for Kabul is wanted by U.S. as terrorist," *NBC News*, August 26, 2021, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/new-taliban-head-security-kabul-wanted-u-s-terrorist-n1277700>; Jack Newman, "One of America's most-wanted terrorists on the streets of Kabul: Taliban fundraiser Khalil Haqqani - who has a \$5m bounty on his head for his links to Al Qaeda - greets adoring crowds in Kabul," *Daily Mail*, August 20, 2021, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9912609/Taliban-fundraiser-Khalil-Haqqani-wanted-links-Al-Qaeda-greets-crowds-Kabul.html>; "Khalil Haqqani, long on America's terrorist list, is welcomed by cheering crowds in Kabul," *New York Times*, August 20, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/08/20/world/biden-afghanistan-taliban/khalil-haqqani-long-on-americas-terrorist-list-is-welcomed-by-cheering-crowds-in-kabul>; Jamie Dettmer, "Hardline Haqqani Network Put in Charge of Kabul Security," *Voice of America*, August 19, 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/hardline-haqqani-network-put-charge-kabul-security>.
- **June 1, 2021:** According to a report published by the U.N. Security Council, the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and the Haqqani network "remain closely aligned and show no indication of breaking ties." The report also claims that Sirajuddin Haqqani, the deputy emir of the Taliban, is also a member of the wider al-Qaeda leadership. Source: "Letter dated 20 May 2021 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council," *United Nations Security Council*, June 1, 2021, <https://www.undocs.org/en/S/2021/486>.
- **January 4, 2021:** According to an assessment by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, al-Qaeda allegedly works closely with the Taliban and Haqqani network through its network of mentors and advisors. Al-Qaeda allegedly does not only provide advice, guidance, and financial support, but has reportedly discussed forming and funding a new joint unit of armed fighters in cooperation with the Haqqani network. Sources: "MEMORANDUM FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL," *United States Department of the Treasury*, January 4, 2021, <https://oig.treasury.gov/sites/oig/files/2021-01/OIG-CA-21-012.pdf>.
- **May 27, 2020:** The United Nations releases a report claiming that the Taliban and especially the Haqqani network, continues to work closely with al-Qaeda, despite the Taliban's peace deal with the American government. According to the report, about 400 to 600 armed al-Qaeda operatives are stationed in Afghanistan. The February 29 peace agreement saw the Taliban agree to prevent al-Qaeda from operating in Afghanistan in order for U.S. troops to gradually withdraw from Afghanistan. Despite the conditions of the negotiations, the U.N. report claims that the Taliban regularly consulted with al-Qaeda during the peace process, promising to not break its "historical ties" with al-Qaeda for any price. According to the report, discussions were held among senior Haqqani network figures to form a new unit of over 2,000 armed fighters which would be funded by and in cooperation with al-Qaeda. Sources: Ryan Browne and Jennifer Hansler, "UN report says Taliban is maintaining relations with al-Qaeda despite deal with US," *CNN*, June 1, 2020, [https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/01/politics/un-report-taliban-al-qaeda/index.html?utm\\_source=iterable&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=1259405\\_](https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/01/politics/un-report-taliban-al-qaeda/index.html?utm_source=iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=1259405_); Karen DeYoung and Dan Lamothe, "Taliban continues to back al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, despite deal with Trump administration, report says," *Washington Post*, June 1, 2020, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/taliban-continues-to-back-al-qaeda-in-afghanistan-despite-deal-with-trump-administration-report-says/2020/06/01/096b159c-a41c-11ea-8681-7d471bf20207\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/taliban-continues-to-back-al-qaeda-in-afghanistan-despite-deal-with-trump-administration-report-says/2020/06/01/096b159c-a41c-11ea-8681-7d471bf20207_story.html).

## *Haqqani Network*

- **May 22, 2020:** According to the Department of Defense quarterly report to the U.S. Congress, it is alleged that Pakistan continues to harbor the Taliban and its associated militant groups, including the Haqqani network.  
According to the report, Pakistan continues to harbor the insurgent groups in order to counter Indian influence in Afghanistan. Source: "Pakistan continues to harbour Taliban, Haqqani Network, says new Pentagon report," The Economic Times, May 22, 2020, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/pakistan-continues-to-harbour-taliban-haqqani-network-says-new-pentagon-report/articleshow/75888700.cms>.
- **May 7, 2020:** Afghan security forces carry out an operation targeting a joint ISIS-Haqqani network cell in Kabul.  
The operation kills five insurgents and leads to the arrest of eight others. Although the two insurgent groups targeted each other in the past, Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security (NDS) believes that the militant groups are now working together and were responsible for the attack against a Sikh temple in March. According to the NDS, the hideouts were controlled by a militant named Sanaullah who was allegedly responsible for recruitment for ISIS's Wilayat Khorasan and was the urban coordinator for the Haqqani network in Kabul. Source: Shishir Gupta, "Taliban-linked Haqqani network, not just ISKP, plotted Kabul gurdwara strike: NDS," Hindustan Times, May 7, 2020, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/taliban-linked-haqqani-network-not-just-iskp-plotted-kabul-gurdwara-strike-nds/story-ihI776W3zeVtc3CrNnWUTJ.html>.
- **March 20, 2020:** According to an Urdu-language periodical, the U.S. frees over 1,500 members of the Haqqani network in exchange for a CIA official who was being held hostage by the Taliban.  
Source: "Jihad and Terrorism Threat Monitor (JTTM) Weekend Summary: Week of March 14-21, 2020," The Middle East Media Research Institute, March 20, 2020, <https://www.memri.org/reports/jihad-and-terrorism-threat-monitor-jttm-weekend-summary-week-march-14-21-2020>.
- **February 20, 2020:** The *New York Times* publishes an op-ed by Sirajuddin Haqqani, the leader of the Haqqani network and the deputy leader of the Taliban.  
In the op-ed, Haqqani, a U.S. designated global terrorist, argues for a peace agreement between the U.S. and Afghan leaders. Haqqani also writes for the support of the international community following the withdrawal of the United States to further stabilize and develop Afghanistan. The article is published days before the U.S.-Taliban peace agreement on February 29. The newspaper is widely criticized for giving Haqqani a platform and omitting his links to terrorism. Source: Sirajuddin Haqqani, "What We, the Taliban, Want," *New York Times*, February 20, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/20/opinion/taliban-afghanistan-war-haqqani.html>; Lloyd Grove, "NYT Publishes Taliban 'Terrorist' Op-Ed, All Hell Breaks Loose," Daily Beast, February 20, 2020, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/nyt-publishes-taliban-terrorist-op-ed-all-hell-breaks-loose>; Katie Shepherd, "New York Times hit for publishing op-ed by Taliban leader linked to 'ruthless attacks,'" *Washington Post*, February 21, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/02/21/nyt-taliban-haqqani/>.
- **November 12, 2019:** Afghan President Ashraf Ghani announces that Afghanistan will release two senior Taliban commanders and Anas Haqqani, a leader of the Haqqani network, in exchange for an Australian and American professor who were kidnapped in 2016.  
Kabul releases the insurgents in hopes of securing direct talks with the Taliban to deescalate violence in the country. Anas Haqqani is the younger brother of Sirajuddin Haqqani, the leader of the Haqqani network and second-in-command in the Afghan Taliban. Source: Hamid Shalizi, "Afghanistan to swap Taliban militants for American, Australian captives," Reuters, November 12, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-taliban/afghanistan-to-swap-taliban-militants-for-american-australian-captives-idUSKBN1XM001>.
- **August 14, 2019:** The Afghan Special Forces arrest Sardar Mohammad, also known as Khalifa Daud, in Kabul.  
Mohammad is allegedly a key Haqqani network member who was responsible for facilitating the supply of weapons, munitions, and military kits to the Taliban and other militants. Source: "Special Forces arrest Khalifa Daud, Haqqani network's key member in Kabul," Khaama Press, August 14, 2019, <https://www.khaama.com/special-forces-arrest-khalifa-daud-haqqani-networks-key-member-in-kabul-03625/>.
- **July 4, 2019:** U.S. forces conduct airstrikes in Maidan Wardak, Afghanistan.  
The airstrikes target and kill 15 Taliban militants as well as Qari Syed Agha, one of the commanders of the Haqqani network. Source: "U.S. airstrikes kill Haqqani Network commander, 14 Taliban militants in Wardak," Khaama Press, July 4, 2019, <https://www.khaama.com/u-s-airstrikes-kill-haqqani-network-commander-14-taliban-militants-in-wardak-03819/>.
- **March 8, 2019:** Afghan police arrest Haqqani commander Mullah Mirwais in Jalalabad, Nangahar province.  
Source: "Key Haqqani network commander arrested in E. Afghanistan," Xinhua, March 8, 2019, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/08/c\\_137878783.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/08/c_137878783.htm).
- **February 12, 2019:** The Taliban demand that Anas Haqqani, the jailed brother of Haqqani leader Sirajuddin Haqqani and senior commander within the group, be released from jail and added to their negotiation team.  
Source: Ayesha Tanzeem, "Taliban Add Haqqani Leader's Jailed Brother to Afghan Peace Negotiation Team," Voice of America, February 12, 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/a/taliban-add-haqqani-leader-s-jailed-brother-to-negotiation-team/4783411.html>.
- **December 17, 2018:** Three representatives of the Haqqani network accompany the Taliban delegation to the Pakistan-sponsored peace talks between the Taliban and United States taking place in the United Arab Emirates.  
Source: Kathy Gannon, "Taliban say talks focused on US withdrawal from Afghanistan," Associated Press, December 19, 2018, <https://www.apnews.com/61121b245e9d4432b911df7004b6d4da>.
- **November 22, 2018:** An unidentified group bombs a Haqqani Network meeting place in south Waziristan, Pakistan, killing three and wounding the regional commander Jamshed Khan.  
Source: Saud Mehsud, "Bomb attack on hideout of Haqqani militants kills three in Pakistan," Reuters, November 22, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-blast/bomb-attack-on-hideout-of-haqqani-militants-kills-three-in-pakistan-idUSKCN1NR19D>.
- **November 2, 2018:** Pakistani cleric Maulana Samiul Haq, who taught many Taliban and Haqqani leaders, including Sirajuddin Haqqani, is killed in a knife attack in Pakistan.  
Source: "Pakistan's 'father of the Taliban' killed in knife attack," *Guardian* (London), November 2, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/02/pakistan-maulana-samiul-haq-father-of-the-taliban-cleric-killed-in-knife-attack>.
- **September 3, 2018:** The Taliban announce the death of Jalaluddin Haqqani at age 71 from health complications.  
According to the statement, Haqqani had been "ill and bedridden for the past several years." It is the first time the Taliban release an official statement about Haqqani's death. The statement does not list a specific date of death, leading Afghan officials to reaffirm their belief that Haqqani had died several years earlier. Sources: Kathy



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Gannon, "Death of Afghan group's founder unlikely to weaken militants," Associated Press, September 4, 2018,

[https://www.apnews.com/be6aab352110497696d9a01f3bf693/Taliban-Founder-of-Haqqani-network-dies-inside-Afghanistan?utm\\_campaign=SocialFlow&utm\\_medium=AP&utm\\_source=Twitter](https://www.apnews.com/be6aab352110497696d9a01f3bf693/Taliban-Founder-of-Haqqani-network-dies-inside-Afghanistan?utm_campaign=SocialFlow&utm_medium=AP&utm_source=Twitter);

Mujib Mashal, "Taliban Say Haqqani Founder Is Dead. His Group Is More Vital Than Ever," *New York Times*, September 4, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/04/world/asia/jalaluddin-haqqani-dead-taliban.html>.

- **August 7, 2016:** Haqqani gunmen dressed in Afghan military uniforms kidnap American professor Kevin King and Australian professor Timothy Weeks from the Kabul campus of the American University of Afghanistan. The militants demand the release of Jalaluddin Haqqani's youngest son, Annas Haqqani, who is imprisoned in Afghanistan. The United States offers a \$1 million reward for information leading to King's safe return. In October 2017, the Taliban release a video message detailing King's deteriorating health. Sources: Associated Press, "American and Australian kidnapped in Kabul by five gunmen," *Guardian* (London), August 8, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/08/australian-academic-and-us-colleague-abducted-in-kabul-say-reports>; Ayaz Gul, "Taliban Demand Swap of Haqqani Member, Others for Western Hostages," *Voice of America*, August 14, 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/a/taliban-demand-swap-of-haqqani-member-others-for-western-hostages/4528031.html>.
- Sirajuddin Haqqani is appointed as a deputy to Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mohammed Mansour. The Haqqani network further integrates into the Taliban. Sources: Jibran Ahmad, "Taliban's Haqqani may be even more deadly foe than Mansour," Reuters, May 22, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan-taliban-successor/talibans-haqqani-may-be-even-more-deadly-foe-than-mansour-idUSKCN0YD0H6>; "Counter Terrorism Guide," U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence, accessed September 12, 2018, [https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/haqqani\\_network.html](https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/haqqani_network.html).
- A senior member of the Haqqani network claims that its founder, Jalaluddin Haqqani, has been dead for more than a year. Neither U.S. intelligence nor the Taliban confirm Haqqani's death. Source: Matthew Rosenberg and Ihsanullah Tipu Mehsud, *New York Times*, July 31, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/01/world/asia/founder-of-haqqani-network-died-nearly-a-year-ago-member-says.html>.
- **June 1, 2015:** The Afghan government leaks a letter from President Ashraf Ghani to the Pakistani government urging Islamabad to detain members of the Taliban and the Haqqani network. Source: Mariana Baarbar, "Kabul seeks detention of Taliban, Haqqani network leaders," *Politico*, June 1, 2015, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0912/80911.html>.
- **January 15, 2015:** Pakistan outlaws the Haqqani network after the Taliban's attack on a Peshawar school leaves 134 children dead. Source: Mehreen Zahra-Malik, "Pakistan bans Haqqani network after talks with Kerry," Reuters, January 16, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/16/us-pakistan-militants-haqqani-idUSKBN0KP1DA20150116>.
- **July 15, 2014:** The Haqqani network uses a truck to deliver a bomb to a crowded market in eastern Afghanistan, killing 72. Source: Mirwais Harooni, "Senior Leaders of the Haqqani Network Arrested in Afghanistan," *Huffington Post*, October 16, 2014, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/16/haqqani-network-leaders-arrested\\_n\\_5995800.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/16/haqqani-network-leaders-arrested_n_5995800.html).
- The U.S. creates a special military unit headquartered in Kabul dedicated to dismantling the Haqqani network. Source: Missy Ryan and Phil Stewart, "Eyeing Afghan exit, U.S. intensifies campaign against Haqqani militants," Reuters, February 26, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/02/26/us-afghanistan-usa-militants-idUSBREA1O1SV20140226>.
- A U.S. drone strike in Pakistan kills five Taliban members in addition to a senior commander in the Haqqani network, Maulvi Ahmad Jan. Source: Mushtaq Yusufzai, "Drone strike kills Haqqani network's No. 2, other Taliban commanders: officials," *NBC News*, November 21, 2013, <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/other/drone-strike-kills-haqqani-networks-no-2-other-taliban-commanders-f2D11632474>.
- Militants allegedly affiliated with the Haqqani network kidnap Canadian citizen Joshua Boyle and his pregnant American wife, Caitlan Coleman, in Afghanistan. The couple give birth to three children during their five-year captivity. In August 2016, the captors release a video of the hostages reading a script demanding the release of Taliban prisoners in exchange for their lives. Haqqani militants release another video in December 2016 in which the family demands the release of Haqqani family members. Pakistani forces rescue the family in Pakistan in October 2017. Boyle alleges that his wife was raped during their captivity and that their captors killed a fourth child, an infant daughter who was born during the ordeal. Sources: Mujib Mashal, "Taliban Deny Fighters Raped American Hostage and Killed Baby," *New York Times*, October 15, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/15/world/asia/taliban-hostage-rape.html>; Associated Press, "US family seeks pregnant daughter missing in Afghanistan," *Guardian* (London), December 31, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/dec/31/us-family-pregnant-missing-afghanistan>; Mazin Sidahmed, "Afghanistan hostage couple make video plea for 'Kafkaesque nightmare' to end," *Guardian* (London), December 20, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/20/afghanistan-hostage-couple-video-appeal-caitlan-coleman-joshua-boyle>; Jibran Ahmad, "Taliban video shows sons born to kidnapped U.S., Canadian couple," Reuters, December 20, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-hostages-idUSKBN149014>; David Ljunggren and Maggie Parkhill, "Canadian says child killed, U.S. wife raped during Afghan kidnapping," Reuters, October 13, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-afghanistan-kidnapping-canad/canadian-says-child-killed-u-s-wife-raped-during-afghan-kidnapping-idUSKBN1CJ01O>.
- **September 7, 2012:** The U.S. Department of State designates the Haqqani network a Foreign Terrorist Organization under Executive Order 13224. Source: Associated Press, "Haqqani network designated terrorist organization by U.S.," *Politico*, September 7, 2012, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0912/80911.html>.
- A U.S. drone strike targets Haqqani network operational commander Badruddin Haqqani in Pakistan. The Taliban at first deny reports Haqqani died in the strike. In September 2013, the Taliban confirm that Haqqani had died, though the Taliban do not provide any other details. Sources: Bill Roggio, "Taliban confirm death of Badruddin Haqqani in drone strike last year," *Long War Journal*, September 8, 2013, [https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/09/taliban\\_confirm\\_deat\\_1.php](https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/09/taliban_confirm_deat_1.php); Bill Roggio, "Badruddin Haqqani 'is alive and healthy,' Taliban spokesman says," *Long War Journal*, August 26, 2012, [https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/badruddin\\_haqqani\\_al.php](https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/badruddin_haqqani_al.php).
- The Haqqani network launches an assault in Kabul that leaves 36 insurgents and 11 others dead. Source: Associated Press, "Haqqani militant network behind deadly Afghanistan assault," April 16, 2012, *New York Daily News*, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/haqqani-militant-network-behind-deadly-afghanistan-assault-article-1.1062366>.
- U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton proposes peace talks between the U.S. government and the Haqqani network. Source: Donna Cassata, "Clinton defends outreach to Taliban-linked group," *NBC News*, October 27, 2011, [http://www.nbcnews.com/id/45066513/ns/politics-capitol\\_hill/clinton-defends-outreach-taliban-linked-group/](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/45066513/ns/politics-capitol_hill/clinton-defends-outreach-taliban-linked-group/).

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- The Haqqani network launch a nearly day-long assault on the U.S. embassy in Kabul and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). At least sixteen Afghan civilians, including six children, are killed in the attack. Source: "Haqqani Network," United Nations Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), accessed June 18, 2015, <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1988/NSTE01212E.shtml>.
- The Haqqani network claims responsibility for an attack on the International Hotel in Kabul that kills 11 Afghan civilians and two policemen. Source: "Haqqani Network," United Nations Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), accessed June 18, 2015, <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1988/NSTE01212E.shtml>.
- The Haqqani network launches attacks on government buildings in Kabul, killing five and wounding 70. Source: "Haqqani Network," United Nations Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), accessed June 18, 2015, <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1988/NSTE01212E.shtml>.
- **July 7, 2008:** A car bomb explodes at the Indian embassy in Kabul, killing 54. The Haqqani network claims responsibility. Source: Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 230.
- **April 27, 2008:** The Haqqani network executes an assassination attempt on Afghan President Karzai. The president escapes, but three people are killed. Source: Anand Gopal, "The Most Deadly US Foe in Afghanistan," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 1, 2009, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2009/0601/p10s01-wosc.html>.
- The Haqqani network attacks the Serena Hotel in Kabul, killing eight people. Source: "Haqqani Network," United Nations Security Council Committee, 2011, <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1988/NSTE01212E.shtml>.
- Military officers in the Western coalition describe the Haqqani network as the most dangerous threat to Afghan security. Source: Matt Duppe, "The Haqqani Network: Reign of Terror," *Long War Journal*, August 2, 2008, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/08/the\\_haqqani\\_network.php#ixzz3PxiGGbMx](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/08/the_haqqani_network.php#ixzz3PxiGGbMx).
- The Haqqani network deploys a suicide bomber aboard a bus carrying Afghan Army recruits, killing 31. Source: Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 230.
- Jalaluddin Haqqani reportedly takes on a more symbolic role within the Haqqani network as he grows increasingly ill. Source: Mujib Mashal, "Taliban Say Haqqani Founder Is Dead. His Group Is More Vital Than Ever," *New York Times*, September 4, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/04/world/asia/jalaluddin-haqqani-dead-taliban.html>.
- The Haqqani network orchestrates a suicide bombing that kills Abdul Hakim Taniwal, the governor of Paktika province and a close associate of Afghan President Hamid Karzai. A second suicide bomber struck Taniwal's funeral procession on the following day, killing 7 and wounding more than 40. Source: "Bomb Attack Kills Afghan Governor," BBC News, September 10, 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/5333178.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/5333178.stm).
- Following al-Qaeda's 9/11 attacks and the subsequent U.S. war in Afghanistan, Haqqani fighters flee across the Pakistani frontier and establish a base of operations in North Waziristan. The Haqqani network spurns an offer from Pakistan and the United States to turn against the Taliban and instead extends a safe harbor to retreating al-Qaeda forces. Source: Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 224.
- Mullah Omar is made Amir ul-Momineen, the leader of the Taliban, when it captures Kabul by force and asserts control over most of Afghanistan. In exchange for his support of the Taliban, Haqqani is made a member of the cabinet as the Minister of Tribal Affairs until the United States ousts the Taliban government in 2001. Source: Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 60, 257.
- The Taliban seize control of Kandahar. Soon after, Haqqani pledges allegiance to the Taliban. Source: Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 12.
- Afghanistan falls to the mujahideen, in which Haqqani plays a key role. Source: Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 256.
- - : The Haqqani network establishes ties with Osama bin Laden's forces during the anti-Soviet war. Source: Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 224.
- Jalaluddin Haqqani expands his area of operations from the Zadran tribal areas to the cities of Khost and Urgan, which his forces seize from the Afghan government forces and their Soviet backers. Source: Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 234.
- Jalaluddin Haqqani begins to train Islamist militants in North Waziristan, with the goal of ousting Afghan President Mohammad Daud Khan, who had recently seized power in a coup. Source: *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Jalaluddin Haqqani," accessed June 10, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1844743/Jalaluddin-Haqqani>.

## *Haqqani Network*

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### **Violent history:**

The Haqqani network has employed violence since its founding. Haqqani fighters first acquired battlefield experience during the Soviet occupation in the 1980s. Members later honed their capabilities in the realm of terrorism through deep cooperation with al-Qaeda and the Taliban, especially after 2001.<sup>52</sup> For a period, the Haqqani network was regarded by both the U.S. and Afghan governments as the most dangerous outfit operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan. By 2011, Haqqani operations accounted for 10 percent of attacks on coalition forces and about 15% of casualties.

<sup>53</sup> Since 2011, the group has sustained heavy casualties from the Pakistani military as well as from U.S. drone strikes, but it remains a formidable fighting force in the region.

The Haqqani network has executed a number of violent attacks, including:

- **May 14, 2020:** A car bomb detonates in Gardez, eastern Afghanistan. The attack kills five people and wounds 14 others. Tariq Arian, an interior ministry spokesman, claims the Haqqani network is responsible for the attack.<sup>54</sup>
- **November 23, 2018:** Unidentified assailants detonate a bomb at a mosque in Khost province, Afghanistan, killing 27 and wounding scores more. No group claims responsibility. However, the area is a known stronghold for the Haqqani network.<sup>55</sup>
- **May 9, 2018:** Gunmen and suicide bombers kill at least seven and wound 17 in two separate attacks on a police station and near a bank, both in Kabul. The Taliban claim responsibility for the attack near the bank, claiming the attack targeted the nearby Afghan intelligence agency. The Afghan National Directorate for Security blames the Haqqani network for both attacks.<sup>56</sup>
- **January 27, 2018:** A militant drives an explosives-filled ambulance into a fortified area of Kabul home to government buildings and hospitals, killing at least 103 people and wounding 235. Investigators believe a second ambulance may have been involved but the attackers escaped. The Taliban claim responsibility for the bombing, calling the attack a warning to U.S. President Donald Trump against the U.S. “policy of aggression” in Afghanistan. U.S. authorities suspect the Haqqani network of orchestrating the attack.<sup>57</sup>
- **January 20, 2018:** Gunmen wearing army uniforms storm the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul late and take hotel guests hostage during a 14-hour standoff with Afghan security forces and NATO troops. At least 22 civilians are killed, according to the Afghan government, but local news outlets report the death toll is at least 43. At least 14 foreign nationals are among the fatalities. Ten others are wounded, including six security officers. The Taliban claim responsibility. The Afghan government accuses Haqqani militants of carrying out the attack.<sup>58</sup>
- **May 31, 2017:** A fake sewage tanker truck carrying 3,000 pounds of explosives explodes in a high-security district of Kabul, Afghanistan, killing 150 people and wounding 400. There are no immediate claims of responsibility but the Afghan government accuses the Haqqani network of orchestrating the attack.<sup>59</sup>
- **August 7, 2016:** Haqqani gunmen dressed in Afghan military uniforms kidnap American professor Kevin King and Australian professor Timothy Weeks from the Kabul campus of the American University of Afghanistan. The militants demand the release of Jalaluddin Haqqani’s youngest son, Annas Haqqani, who is imprisoned in Afghanistan. The United States offers a \$1 million reward for information leading to King’s safe return. In October 2017, the Taliban release a video message detailing King’s deteriorating health.<sup>60</sup>
- **January 15, 2015:** Pakistan outlaws the Haqqani network after the Taliban’s attack on a Peshawar school leaves 134 children dead.<sup>61</sup>
- **July 15, 2014:** The Haqqani network uses a truck to deliver a bomb to a crowded market in eastern Afghanistan, killing 72.<sup>62</sup>
- **October 2012:** Militants allegedly affiliated with the Haqqani network kidnap Canadian citizen Joshua Boyle and his pregnant American wife, Caitlan Coleman, in Afghanistan. The couple give birth to three children during their five-year captivity. In August 2016, the captors release a video of the hostages reading a script demanding the release of Taliban prisoners in exchange for their lives. Haqqani militants release another video in December 2016 in which the family demands the release of Haqqani family members. Pakistani forces rescue the family in Pakistan in October 2017. Boyle alleges that his wife was raped during their captivity and that their captors killed a fourth child, an infant daughter who was born during the ordeal.<sup>63</sup>
- **April 2012:** The Haqqani network launches an assault in Kabul that leaves 36 insurgents and 11 others dead.<sup>64</sup>
- **September 2011:** The Haqqani network launches a nearly day-long assault on the U.S. embassy in Kabul and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). At least sixteen Afghan civilians, including six children, are killed in the attack.<sup>65</sup>
- **June 2011:** The Haqqani network claims responsibility for an attack on the International Hotel in Kabul that kills 11 Afghan civilians and two policemen.<sup>66</sup>
- **January 2010:** The Haqqani network launches attacks on government buildings in Kabul, killing five and wounding 70.<sup>67</sup>

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- **July 7, 2008:** A car bomb explodes at the Indian embassy in Kabul, killing 54. The Haqqani network claims responsibility.<sup>68</sup>
- **April 27, 2008:** The Haqqani network executes an assassination attempt on Afghan President Hamid Karzai. The president escapes, but three people are killed.<sup>69</sup>
- **January 2008:** The Haqqani network attacks the Serena Hotel in Kabul, killing eight people.<sup>70</sup>
- **September 2007:** The Haqqani network deploys a suicide bomber aboard a bus carrying Afghan Army recruits, killing 31.<sup>71</sup>
- **September 2006:** The Haqqani network orchestrates a suicide bombing that kills Abdul Hakim Taniwal, the governor of Paktika province and a close associate of Afghan President Hamid Karzai. A second suicide bomber struck Taniwal's funeral procession on the following day, killing 7 and wounding more than 40.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Don Rassler and Vahid Brown, "The Haqqani Network and al-Qaeda," *Foreign Policy*, July 19, 2011, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/07/19/the-haqqani-network-and-al-qaeda/>.

<sup>53</sup> Lisa Curtis, "Combating the Haqqani Terrorist Network," Heritage Foundation, September 13, 2012, <http://www.heritage.org/research/testimony/2012/09/combating-the-haqqani-terrorist-network>.

<sup>54</sup> "Truck bomb in eastern Afghanistan's Gardez kills five, 14 injured," *Hindustan Times*, May 14, 2020, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/truck-bomb-in-eastern-afghanistan-s-gardez-kills-five-14-injured/story-yfbrQdLzCObaEKNxymdFSJ.html>.

<sup>55</sup> "The Latest: Death toll in Afghan base bombing rises to 27," Associated Press, November 23, 2018, <https://www.apnews.com/fcc7e3c5ee704edaba47d7c00d4f539b>.

<sup>56</sup> Jawad Sukhanyar and Rod Nordland, "Militants Kill 15 in Afghan Attacks, as Taliban Expand Their Control," *New York Times*, May 9, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/09/world/asia/afghanistan-attack-kabul.html>.

<sup>57</sup> Phil Stewart and Michelle Nichols, "U.S. sees Haqqani network behind ambulance bombing in Kabul," Reuters, January 29, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-blast-usa-haqqani/u-s-sees-haqqani-network-behind-ambulance-bombing-in-kabul-idUSKBN1F12L0>; Akram Walizada, "Shock gives way to despair in Kabul after ambulance bomb," Reuters, January 27, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-blast/shock-gives-way-to-despair-in-kabul-after-ambulance-bomb-idUSKBN1FG086>.

<sup>58</sup> Ehsan Popalzai and Susannah Cullinane, "Kabul hotel siege: Journalist describes night of terror from inside," CNN, January 22, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/22/asia/kabul-intercontinental-hotel-omeri/index.html>.

<sup>59</sup> Haq Nawaz Khan and Pamela Constable, "A much-feared Taliban offshoot returns from the dead," *Washington Post*, July 19, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/ruthless-taliban-branch-is-center-stage-in-us-pakistan-tensions/2017/07/18/dc03b2b4-5a89-11e7-aa69-3964a7d55207\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.16c326c63206](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/ruthless-taliban-branch-is-center-stage-in-us-pakistan-tensions/2017/07/18/dc03b2b4-5a89-11e7-aa69-3964a7d55207_story.html?utm_term=.16c326c63206).

<sup>60</sup> Associated Press, "American and Australian kidnapped in Kabul by five gunmen," *Guardian* (London), August 8, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/08/australian-academic-and-us-colleague-abducted-in-kabul-sayreports>; Ayaz Gul, "Taliban Demand Swap of Haqqani Member, Others for Western Hostages," *Voice of America*, August 14, 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/a/taliban-demand-swap-of-haqqani-member-others-for-western-hostages/4528031.html>.

<sup>61</sup> Mehreen Zahra-Malik, "Pakistan bans Haqqani network after talks with Kerry," Reuters, January 16, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/16/us-pakistan-militants-haqqani-idUSKBN0KP1DA20150116>.

<sup>62</sup> Mirwais Harooni, "Senior Leaders of the Haqqani Network Arrested in Afghanistan," *Huffington Post*, October 16, 2014, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/16/haqqani-network-leaders-arrested\\_n\\_5995800.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/16/haqqani-network-leaders-arrested_n_5995800.html).

<sup>63</sup> Mujib Mashal, "Taliban Deny Fighters Raped American Hostage and Killed Baby," *New York Times*, October 15, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/15/world/asia/taliban-hostage-rape.html>; Associated Press, "US family seeks pregnant daughter missing in Afghanistan," *Guardian* (London), December 31, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/dec/31/us-family-pregnant-missing-afghanistan>; Mazin Sidahmed, "Afghanistan hostage couple make video plea for 'Kafkaesque nightmare' to end," *Guardian* (London), December 20, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/20/afghanistan-hostage-couple-video-appeal-caitlan-coleman-joshua-boyle>; Jibrán Ahmad, "Taliban video shows sons born to kidnapped U.S., Canadian couple," Reuters, December 20, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-hostages-idUSKBN1490I4>; David Ljunggren and Maggie Parkhill, "Canadian says child killed, U.S. wife raped during Afghan kidnapping," Reuters, October 13, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-afghanistan-kidnapping-canad/canadian-says-child-killed-u-s-wife-raped-during-afghan-kidnapping-idUSKBN1CJ010>.

<sup>64</sup> Associated Press, "Haqqani militant network behind deadly Afghanistan assault," April 16, 2012, *New York Daily News*, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/haqqani-militant-network-behind-deadly-afghanistan-assault-article-1.1062366>.

<sup>65</sup> "Haqqani Network," United Nations Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), accessed June 18, 2015, <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1988/NSTE01212E.shtml>.

<sup>66</sup> "Haqqani Network," United Nations Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), accessed June 18, 2015, <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1988/NSTE01212E.shtml>.

<sup>67</sup> "Haqqani Network," United Nations Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), accessed June 18, 2015, <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1988/NSTE01212E.shtml>.

<sup>68</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 232.

<sup>69</sup> Anand Gopal, "The Most Deadly US Foe in Afghanistan," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 1, 2009, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2009/0601/p10s01-wosc.html>.

<sup>70</sup> "Haqqani Network," United Nations Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), accessed June 18, 2015, <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1988/NSTE01212E.shtml>.

<sup>71</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 230.

<sup>72</sup> "Bomb Attack Kills Afghan Governor," *BBC News*, September 10, 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/5333178.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/5333178.stm).

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**Designations:**

*Designations by the U.S. Government:*

- ○ **March 2008:** The U.S. Department of State added Sirajuddin Haqqani to its list of specially designated global terrorists in March 2008.<sup>73</sup>
- **September 7, 2012:** The U.S. Department of State designated the Haqqani network a Foreign Terrorist Organization under Executive Order 13224 on September 7, 2012.<sup>74</sup>

*Designations by Foreign Governments and Organizations:*

- **November 2012:** The United Nations designated the Haqqani network as a Proscribed Terrorist Organization in November 2012.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Bill Roggio, "US State Department adds Mullah Sangeen to terrorist list," *Long War Journal*, August 16, 2011, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/08/us\\_state\\_department\\_1.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/08/us_state_department_1.php).

<sup>74</sup> Associated Press, "Haqqani network designated terrorist organization by U.S.," *Politico*, September 7, 2012, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0912/80911.html>.

<sup>75</sup> "Haqqani Network," United Nations Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), accessed June 18, 2015, <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1988/NSTE01212E.shtml>.



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### **Associations:**

#### *Ties to Extremist Entities:*

- **Al-Qaeda**

The Haqqani network maintains extensive links to al-Qaeda in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. U.S. intelligence findings indicate that the network has supplied vital assistance to al-Qaeda in the realm of training, propaganda support and networking channels.<sup>76</sup> This record has solidified a robust collaborative relationship between the Haqqani network and core al-Qaeda.<sup>77</sup> After the 2001 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, the Haqqanis used the Manba Ulom madrassa in North Waziristan, Pakistan, as a training center and meeting site for al-Qaeda.<sup>78</sup> A June 2021 U.N. report concluded the Haqqani Network is the “primary component” in relations between al-Qaeda and the Taliban.<sup>79</sup>

On July 31, 2022, a CIA drone strike killed al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in Kabul’s Sherpoor area. According to U.S. President Joe Biden, Zawahiri had been staying in the house that had been targeted. The house reportedly belonged to a top aide to Sirajuddin Haqqani.<sup>80</sup> According to a senior Biden official, the residence was a safe house operated by the Haqqani network and senior Haqqani network figures were aware of Zawahiri’s presence in Kabul. After the strike, Haqqani network members worked to conceal Zawahiri’s former presence at the house and moved Zawahiri’s wife, his daughter, and her children to another location.<sup>81</sup> Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid condemned the strike as a violation of “international principles.”<sup>82</sup>

- **Taliban**

The Haqqani network is considered an integral part of the Afghan Taliban, but it operates independently from the core organization.<sup>83</sup> Drawing on its own fundraising network, it is financially independent from the Taliban. Despite its largely autonomous status, the Haqqanis continue to advance the objectives of a resurgent Taliban. In May 2014, the Haqqanis orchestrated the release of five Taliban commanders held at Guantanamo Bay in exchange for the U.S. serviceman, Bowe Berghdal.<sup>84</sup> They also pledge allegiance to the Taliban.<sup>85</sup>

On September 7, 2021, a month after the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan, the Taliban announced the official appointments within their caretaker government. Sirajuddin Haqqani was named acting minister of the interior. Haqqani’s role provides him with extensive authority over policing and legal matters in Afghanistan.<sup>86</sup>

#### *Ties to Other Entities:*

- **Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)**

The Haqqani network has had extensive ties with Pakistan’s ISI dating back to the 1980s.<sup>87</sup> According to the Council on Foreign Relations, the Haqqani network has been critical in building and maintaining this insurgency infrastructure on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistani border. It operates as a conduit between the Afghan Taliban and Pakistani intelligence, along with al-Qaeda, and other insurgent groups.<sup>88</sup> In 2011, Admiral Mike Mullen, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called the Haqqanis a “veritable arm” of the ISI.<sup>89</sup>

#### *Ties to Extremist Individuals:*

- **Mullah Mohammed Omar**

The Haqqanis had long pledged allegiance to Mullah Omar and recognized the Taliban leader as *amir al-momineen* (the commander or leader of the faithful).<sup>90</sup>

- **Mullah Akhtar Mansour**

After the announcement of Mullah Omar’s death, members of the Haqqani network recognized his successor, Mullah Akhtar Mansour, as their leader.<sup>91</sup>

- **Osama bin Laden**

The Haqqanis praise al-Qaeda and have shared training personnel with the terrorist organization. Al-Qaeda’s legendary al-Farouq training camp was even located at the Haqqani base at Zawara, Afghanistan.<sup>92</sup>

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- 76 Jason Ukman, "The Haqqani Network: al Qaeda's Dangerous Patron," *Washington Post*, July 11, 2008, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/checkpoint-washington/post/al-qaedas-dangerous-haqqani-patron-in-pakistan/2011/07/18/gIQAtWmcLI\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/checkpoint-washington/post/al-qaedas-dangerous-haqqani-patron-in-pakistan/2011/07/18/gIQAtWmcLI_blog.html).
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- 84 Bill Roggio, "US posts rewards for 5 Haqqani Network leaders," *Long War Journal*, August 21, 2014, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/08/us\\_posts\\_rewards\\_for.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/08/us_posts_rewards_for.php).
- 85 Jeffrey Dressler, "Terror is Their Family Business," *Weekly Standard*, July 16, 2012, [http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/terror-their-family-business\\_648234.html](http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/terror-their-family-business_648234.html).
- 86 Matthieu Aikins and Jim Huylebroek, "Taliban Appoint Stalwarts to Top Government Posts," *New York Times*, September 7, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/07/world/asia/taliban-women-protest-kabul-afghanistan.html>; Kathy Gannon, "Taliban form all-male Afghan government of old guard members," Associated Press, September 8, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-pakistan-afghanistan-arrests-islamabad-d50b1b490d27d32eb20cc11b77c12c87>.
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### Media Coverage:

#### *Western Media*

Western media have recognized the Haqqani network's character as a "militant" Islamist group in open alliance with the Taliban.<sup>93</sup> For the most part, the media concur with the widespread assumption among Western intelligence agencies that the Haqqani network is the most lethal arm of the insurgency in Afghanistan.<sup>94</sup>

Certain media outlets have followed the lead of the Pakistani government in recognizing the Haqqani network's potential to serve as a negotiating partner with the United States in its ongoing fight against the Taliban and al-Qaeda.<sup>95</sup> The London-based *Telegraph*, for one, has played up the Haqqanis' willingness to enter into "peace talks" with the United States. It has referred to the organization as a "militia."<sup>96</sup>

#### *Arab Media*

Al Jazeera has cast the Haqqani network in a relatively positive light, referring to it as an "armed group" aligned with the Taliban.<sup>97</sup> In its coverage of the Haqqani network, Al Jazeera has generally refrained from describing it as a "terrorist" organization, despite its long-established record of targeting civilians. Al Jazeera has been one of the few media outlets to obtain an interview with Sirajuddin Haqqani, the group's operational commander.<sup>98</sup>

Al Jazeera's coverage of the faltering peace process between the United States and the Taliban has been more suspicious than its Western counterparts of the role played by the Afghan government. In 2013, when the Afghan-Taliban peace talks collapsed, Al Jazeera attributed this failure to the objection of the Afghan government "to fanfare surrounding the opening of a Taliban office" in Qatar.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Declan Walsh and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Blacklists Militant Haqqani Network," *New York Times*, September 7, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/08/world/asia/state-department-blacklists-militant-haqqani-network.html>.

<sup>94</sup> Chelsea Carter and Joe Sterling, "Haqqani leader turned network into 'killing machine,' intelligence officials say," CNN, September 7, 2012, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/09/07/world/asia/pakistan-haqqani-profile/>.

<sup>95</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 221.

<sup>96</sup> Rob Crilly, "Haqqani network 'ready to enter peace talks if Taliban approves,'" *Daily Telegraph* (London), November 13, 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/9674405/Haqqani-network-ready-to-enter-peace-talks-with-US-if-Mullah-Omar-approves.html>.

<sup>97</sup> "Haqqani Group Blamed for Suicide Blast," Al Jazeera, November 24, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/southasia/2014/11/haqqani-group-blamed-afghan-suicide-blast-20141124102431935437.html>.

<sup>98</sup> "Taliban Commander Speaks Out," Al Jazeera, June 27, 2010, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2010/01/2010119181112836158.html>.

<sup>99</sup> "Pakistan officials say Afghan Taliban has signaled peace talk readiness," Al Jazeera, February 19, 2015, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/2/19/pakistan-officials-say-afghan-taliban-has-signal-ed-peace-talk-readiness.html>.

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*Haqqani Network*

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**Rhetoric:**

*Sirajuddin Haqqani, operational commander of the Haqqani network, 2010*

“Our Mujahideen were not involved in the attacks, but we are happy that they took place because all foreigners who come to our country are working for the continuity of the current occupation and they help the crusaders in various areas and issues.”<sup>100</sup>

*Sirajuddin Haqqani, operational commander of the Haqqani network, 2010*

“We must give sacrifices in the fight against the crusaders. In this fight, whether we are killed, martyred or thrown in jail we are proud of it.”<sup>101</sup>

*Sirajuddin Haqqani, operational commander of the Haqqani network, 2010*

“When we have the direction of Islam with us, we do not need the spoiled and filthy civilization of the West to tell us about women’s education.”<sup>102</sup>

*Jalaluddin Haqqani, Date Unknown*

“All the Mujahideen wage Jihad ... against the American invaders and their lackeys.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> “Excerpts of Interviews with Sirajuddin Haqqani,” Anand Gopal, accessed April 20, 2015, <http://anandgopal.com/excerpts-of-interviews-with-sirajuddin-haqqani/>.

<sup>101</sup> “Excerpts of Interviews with Sirajuddin Haqqani,” Anand Gopal, accessed April 20, 2015, <http://anandgopal.com/excerpts-of-interviews-with-sirajuddin-haqqani/>.

<sup>102</sup> “Excerpts of Interviews with Sirajuddin Haqqani,” Anand Gopal, accessed April 20, 2015, <http://anandgopal.com/excerpts-of-interviews-with-sirajuddin-haqqani/>.

<sup>103</sup> “Haqqani Network is part of the Taliban – Siraj Haqqani,” Bill Roggio, Long War Journal, October 5, 2012, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/10/siraj\\_haqqani\\_denies.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/10/siraj_haqqani_denies.php).