



remism

Reporting from

London — In an audio message from a hide-out in South Asia this month (June), an Al Qaeda chief did something new: He sang the praises of an ethnic group that once barely registered in the network.

“We consider the Muslims in Turkey our brothers,” said Mustafa Abu Yazid, the network’s operations chief. Lauding Turkish suicide bombers killed in recent attacks near the Afghan-Pakistani border, he declared, “This is a pride and honor to the nation of Islam in Turkey, and we ask Allah to accept them amongst the martyrs.”

The message is the latest sign of the changing composition of Islamic extremism, anti-terrorism officials and experts say. The number of Turks in Al Qaeda, long dominated by Arabs, has increased notably, officials say. And militant groups dominated by Turks and Central Asians, many of whom share Turkic culture and speak a Turkic language, have emerged as allies of and alternatives to Al Qaeda in northwestern Pakistan.

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