

Global Jihad: Summary of Information from Arabic Media Sources

The Second Half of March 2011

This report summarizes the most prominent articles on the subject of global Jihad published in the media in the Arabic language on the second half of March 2011.

Following are the main issues raised in this report:

- The deadly attacks and assassinations in Iraq continue, following the arrest of Al-Qaeda senior members by security forces.
- Yemenite authorities are tackling difficulties controlling the south of the country, especially the Abyan Province, while reports claim Al-Qaeda has succeeded in taking over extensive areas.
- Reports on the arrest in Pakistan of Umar Patek, a "Jamaa Islamiya" operative in Indonesia, suspected of being involved in terrorist attacks in Bali, Indonesia on 2002, killing 202 people.

Afghanistan – Pakistan

Afghanistan

- "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported on March 29th 2011 that the day before, 24 people were killed in a suicide attack. According to the report, 3 suicide bombers broke into a construction company's warehouse, where they detonated a bus loaded with explosives after shooting and killing the guard. The terrorist attack occurred in the Paktika Province, the Taliban movement claimed responsibility for the attack.¹

Pakistan

- The "Al-Jazeera" network reported on March 16th 2011 that American bombings in the Waziristan region using unmanned aircraft continue and that they are raising the ire of the Pakistani people.² On March, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that 38 "radicals" were killed in Waziristan, a Taliban and Al-Qaeda fighters' stronghold, and the stronghold of Hafiz Gul Bahadur, one of the Taliban-Pakistan leaders providing shelter to radicals and sending them to Afghanistan to fight foreign forces. According to the articles there are contradicting reports as to the identity of those killed. One version is that those killed were sheikhs loyal to Bahadur who convened in order to try and mediate between two warring militias, while the other is that these were local sheikhs who convened in order to settle a commercial matter.³ The "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported on March 22nd 2011 that the rebels in Waziristan executed four locals accused of spying for the U.S.⁴

¹ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, 29.3.2011: <http://www.aawsat.com/>

² Al-Jazeera, 16.3.2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net/>

³ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, 18.3.2011: <http://www.aawsat.com/>

⁴ Al-Hayat, 22.3.2011: <http://international.daralhayat.com/>

- The "Al-Hayat" newspaper quoted on March 24th and 25th 2011 foreign news agencies reporting that the suicide attacks and the explosive charges attacks in the tribal regions in northern Pakistan continue to claim lives and that in the south of Pakistan several shootings occurred, also resulting in casualties. The paper further reported that the shootings occurred in the southern city of Karachi, where the ruling "Pakistan Peoples Party", the "Al-Muhajirin" movement, the "Jamaat-e-Islam" and the "Awamy" Party, a national Pakistani party, are fighting for control of the city.⁵

Iraq

- The "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported on March 17th 2011 that Iraqi security forces published pictures of 25 detainees apprehended this year, including a Saudi, a Jordanian and two Iraqis with Swedish citizenship. The security forces reported they succeeded in eliminating the military emir of the "Islamic State of Iraq", Noman Salman Al-Zaydi, at the Al-Anbar province, while he was driving a truck bomb and wearing an explosives belt, following the discovery of a safe-house in Al-Anbar where Al-Zaydi led several suicide bombers and where the organization's meetings were held. It is further reported that Al-Zaydi became the organization's Minister of War following Abu Ayoub Al-Masri's death and that he attempted to transfer the organization's activity out of Iraq. Among the arrested terrorists was Imad Muhammad Fahd, the organization's Minister of Foreign relations, who robbed tribal leaders and imams at mosques, forcing them to join Al-Qaeda. It was

⁵ Al-Hayat, 24-25.3.2011: <http://www.daralhayat.com/1>

also reported that the two men with Swedish citizenship were expert passport forgers who succeeded in extracting 700 terrorists from Iraq.⁶

- The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported on March 20th 2011 that the Iraqi police published a statement according to which Abbas Mukhlif Gieman, a leader in the "Islamic State of Iraq", was arrested in Mosul the day before and that two of his bodyguards were killed.⁷
- The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported on March 17th 2011 that suicide attacks were carried out recently against Kurdish officials in the city of Kirkuk and that the day before saw an attempt on the life of the Manager of the city's Water and Sewage Department by a suicide bomber.⁸
- The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper published on March 18th 2011 an article summarizing eight years of terrorism in Iraq, from which the following conclusions are drawn:
 - In the past 2 years there was a change in the pattern of terrorist attacks, where many of the attacks are assassinations carried out by attachable explosive charges and silenced weapons. The article explains that attachable charges are cheap and they can be dispersed in many places simultaneously. It is further explained that on 2006 – 2008 these means were still unknown.
 - The geographical division between Sunnis and Shiites in Baghdad is not absolute, and the assassinations are not ethnically motivated.
 - There is a certain division between the types of terrorist attacks according to geographical locations in Baghdad with most of the attacks carried out by using explosive devices and attachable explosive devices are executed

⁶ Al-Hayat, 17.3.2011: <http://ksa.daralhayat.com/>

⁷ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, 20.3.2011: <http://www.aawsat.com/>

⁸ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, 17.3.2011: <http://www.aawsat.com/>

in the western part of the city, while attacks using silenced firearms are usually carried out in the eastern part of the city.

- Al-Qaeda, operating in the western part of Baghdad, mostly uses explosive devices, explosive belts, car bombs and attachable explosive devices and the armed organization of whom it is claimed are supported by Iran, operate in the eastern part of Baghdad.
- There are additional findings implying that the eliminations are not motivated by ethnicity, one of which is that the targets are selected according to their profession: journalists, judges, officers and CEO's, whether they are Shiites, Sunnis or Christians; Arabs or Kurds.
- The article quotes Hashim Hassan, a communications professor at the University of Baghdad, who claims that the assassinations are carried out by sleeper cells which occasionally escalate their activity and that the assassinations are a result of meticulous planning, a careful selection of targets and use of information and data bases; and their objective is clear: thwarting the peace process. He further claims that the elements perpetrating the assassinations are stronger than the security forces. The paper also quotes Dr. Mu'taz Muhii Al-Din, Director of the Center for Security Research, who says the elements carrying out the assassinations are more than outlaw organizations wishing to obtain money or influence and that security forces are unable to track them and are soothing the citizens and politicians by saying that they have leads, while security experts know the leads were lost long ago. He claims that the security efforts are ineffective as the enemy terrorist organizations succeeded in infiltrating the most fortified locations and striking security personnel at their work and home. The article quotes several more public officials who

disagree on whether these are random eliminations stemming from criminal activity or whether these are political eliminations carried out by more organized elements *i.e.*- terrorist organizations.⁹

- The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported on March 24th 2011 that five armed factions in Iraq have decided to lay down their arms and join the peace process, as part of the efforts led by the Ministry of National Reconciliation. The factions declared they have decided to hand over their arms after significant progress was made in the American retreat. However, officials at the Iraqi Ministry of National Reconciliation denied having held talks with Al-Qaeda and claimed that the organizations taking part in the negotiations are not connected to Al-Qaeda.¹⁰
- The "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported on March 26th 2011 that the spokesperson for the Baghdad Operations Command, Qasim Ata, declared there is an escalation in the scope of assassinations using silenced weapons, stemming from the renewed activity of several armed organizations associated with the Ba'ath, the Association of Muslim Scholars headed by Harith Dhari and Al-Qaeda. This declaration was made following the Ministry of Interior's announcement on the assassination of an intelligence officer at the Muthana Airport, one of Iraq's fortified military sites beyond the Green Zone and on other assassinations of security personnel that have recently occurred. However, according to the article, there is a difference of opinions on whether elements connected to Dhari are indeed involved in the assassination and whether many of the assassinations are merely personal

⁹ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, 18.3.2011: <http://www.aawsat.com/>

¹⁰ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, 24.3.2011: <http://www.aawsat.com/>

and political conflicts within the security and political establishment rather than terrorist attacks.¹¹

- The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported on March 30th 2011 that in a terrorist attack on the Government Building of the Salah Al-Din Province in the city of Tikrit 58 people were killed, most of whom were police officers. According to reports, the attack was carried out by six gunmen, of whom two or three were suicide bombers. The armed men, who wore military uniforms, broke into the building after one of the suicide bombers detonated himself in front of the guards at the main entrance. This was followed by the gunmen confronting the guards at the inner gate. According to further reports, after additional security forces arrived at the scene in order to assist, a car bomb detonated and, according to some reports, a suicide bomber successfully detonated himself on the building's third floor. The newspaper quoted a declaration made by the Province's spokesperson who said that the attackers planned to take hostages.¹²

Jordan

- The "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported on March 14th 2011 that members of the Salafist Jihadist movement in Jordan demanded the government release the movement's members incarcerated in Jordanian prisons and in other Arab countries, numbering 75 - 90 detainees. The article reports an escalation in the movement members' tone, saying it has reached an unprecedented level. One of the movement's members threatened the Jordanian government that, if the prisoners are not released, the government "will be opening itself a door that will never be shut". The movement's member further threatened to

¹¹ Al-Hayat, 26.3.2011: <http://ksa.daralhayat.com/>

¹² Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, 30.3.2011: <http://www.aawsat.com/>

retaliate against intelligence officers and to follow them "one by one, from alley to alley", alluding to Gaddafi's speech. The demonstrators called out against the U.S. and Israel and demanded that the Mujahideen in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen instill Islamic Sharia.¹³

The Arabian Peninsula

Yemen

- The "Al-Jazeera" website reported on March 23rd 2011 that hundreds of armed Al-Qaeda activists took over the city of Ja'ar in the Abyan Province, considered to be an Al-Qaeda stronghold. It was further reported that the Southern Separatist Opposition movement accused the President of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh, of weakening the army and allowing Al-Qaeda to operate in the south. Senior members in the Southern Separatist Opposition Movement claim that Saleh went as far as ordering the Yemenite army in the south to turn over its posts to Al-Qaeda. According to them, the goal behind Saleh's policy is to signal the international community that if they do not support him, Yemen will fall to Al-Qaeda's hands.¹⁴ On March 27th 2011 the website reported that armed men in Ja'ar took over the presidential palace, the police station and the radio station in the city.¹⁵
- On the end of March 2011, the "Al-Jazeera" website published several articles on the deteriorating security situation in the Abyan Province in southern Yemen and especially in Aden. Besides the takeover of Ja'ar by armed men, as mentioned above, the website reported on March 28th 2011 that masked men are roaming the streets of Aden shouting slogans in favor of an Islamic

¹³ Al-Hayat, 14.3.2011: <http://international.daralhayat.com/>

¹⁴ Al-Jazeera, 23.3.2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net/>

¹⁵ Al-Jazeera, 27.3.2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net/>

Caliphate state and that there is rising concern in the city from it being taken over by radical elements.¹⁶ On March 29th 2011 the website reported that in an explosion at the ammunition factory in the Abyan Province, captured by Al-Qaeda armed operatives, 110 people were killed. According to the report, the army retreated from the factory taken over by Al-Qaeda activists. After the army's withdrawal and after armed Al-Qaeda men evacuated the factory. Hundreds of local residents entered with the intent of looting it when the explosion occurred. There are contradicting versions as to the source of the blast. According to one version the explosion was caused by a cigarette, while according to another the explosion was caused by a mine. It was further reported that in the city of Lawdar in the Abyan Province, armed men took over a military fuel truck and that armed men were seen in the city passing out propaganda materials encouraging people to go on Jihad.¹⁷

- The "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported on March 18th 2011 that Egyptian authorities released Muhammad Al-Zawahiri, brother to Al-Qaeda's second in command, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, along with 58 political prisoners. Muhammad Al-Zawahiri, one of the leaders of the Egyptian Jihad movement, was tried *in absentia* for an attempted coup on 1998 and was sentenced to death. A year later he was extradited by the Emirates to Egypt. Dia Rashuan, an expert on Islamic movements from the Al-Ahram Center, stated that the recent release of Islamists in Egypt is a result of the Military Council's attempt to prove it is respectful of civil liberties, bringing about the release of many political prisoners, even those who were not members of Islamist movements. He also estimated that the Islamists will not revert to carrying out violent acts as they will be able to realize their plans through the ballots, but that as a result of

¹⁶ Al-Jazeera, 28.3.2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net/>

¹⁷ Al-Jazeera, 29.3.2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net/>

the freedom they now enjoy he expects they will experience many schisms.¹⁸

On March 21st 2011 the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported that Muhammad Al-Zawahiri was re-arrested by the authorities.¹⁹

The Maghreb

Algeria

- The "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported on March 28th 2011 that Algerian authorities asked local tribal leaders in the south east of the country, in the region bordering Libya, to help them with security concerns pertaining to Al-Qaeda. According to the report, Algerian authorities learned of the infiltration of scouts and reconnaissance units of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, one of whom was already killed by security forces. It is further reported that Algeria has recently begun to deploy large forces along the border with Libya due to the deterioration of the security situation in Libya. The Algerian Foreign Minister, Murad Medelci, declared that the situation in Libya will impact Algeria's abilities in controlling the anti-terrorist efforts.²⁰

Mauritania

- The "Al-Jazeera" website reported on March 21st 2011 that four Al-Qaeda operatives, who carried out a terrorist attack against Mauritanian Army patrol on 2008, killing a dozen soldiers and desecrating their corpses, were sentenced to death on March 20th. Furthermore, a few days prior, another Salafist activist was sentenced to death for killing an American citizen on 2009. A journalist, Sidi Ahmad Ould Baba, told "Al-Jazeera" in an interview

¹⁸ Al-Hayat, 18.3.2011: <http://international.daralhayat.com/>

¹⁹ Al-Hayat, 21.3.2011: <http://international.daralhayat.com/>

²⁰ Al-Hayat, 28.3.2011: <http://international.daralhayat.com/>

that he estimates the sentence will not be carried out, as in the past other Al-Qaeda activists were sentenced to death but their verdict was reduced, possibly because Mauritanian authorities wish to use those sentenced to death as future bargaining chips with the organization, or have them "recant their beliefs" thus earning a pardon.²¹

Libya

- The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported on March 16th 2011 that Gaddafi, Libya's ruler, threatened that if he were to be under a military attack from the West, he will enter an alliance with Al-Qaeda.²² A day later the paper published Al-Qaeda's response to Gaddafi's statement. According to the report, various websites posted a video segment by Abu Yahya Al-Libi, one of Al-Qaeda's prominent ideologues, who called the Libyan people to continue the revolution, saying that "The Libyan people are rebelling against Gaddafi after having tasted his abuse for over 40 years, during which the Libyans became a testing field for his harmful ideas, his putrid follies, his frivolous policies and his foolish and stupid beliefs". He also accused Gaddafi of taking over the country's funds and of spreading corruption. The article also reported that another Al-Qaeda ideologue, Hussein Bin Mahmoud, said that "No intelligent person doubts that Gaddafi is a mentally deficient madman and he does not lack the intelligence nor the vision to behave in such a manner against the Libyan people". He added that Gaddafi's son, referring to Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi, is "an imbecile that cannot plan such wars" and said that there are rumors he has Jewish, British and Italian advisers.²³

²¹ Al-Jazeera, 21.3.2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net/>

²² Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, 16.3.2011: <http://www.aawsat.com/>

²³ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, 17.3.2011: <http://www.aawsat.com/>

Africa

Somalia

- The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported on March 17th 2011 that the fighting between the "Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen" movement and Somali and African Union forces continue and that at least 16 people were killed in encounters between the parties. The paper reported that besides attacks on army forces, the "Al-Shabab" fighters bombed the presidential palace and were involved in fighting in the capital, Mogadishu. It is further reported that the fighting between Somali government forces and "Al-Shabab" goes on in the country's central provinces and near the border with Kenya. The Somali government claims that the "Al-Shabab" movement controls most of the areas in the center and south of the country and calls on the international community to help it fight the movement. The Somali Minister of Defense said the "Al-Shabab" movement cannot be defeated and forced out of Mogadishu without the use of aerial weapons. The Somali government does not have a strong enough air force to shift the balance in its favor and the matter is expected to be raised at the UN Security Council's session on the partial lifting of the ban on the arming of Somalia. The Somali Minister of Defense further said that the number of foreign fighters amongst the "Al-Shabab" ranks is on the rise and that now there are over 3,000 foreign fighters in the organization. He added that many of these fighters came from Afghanistan, Pakistan and from Arab and African countries. However, the article notes that this number is considerably larger than estimates published by Western intelligence services.²⁴

²⁴ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, 17.3.2011: <http://www.aawsat.com/>

Chad

- The "Al-Hayat" newspaper quoted on March 26th 2011 an interview with the President of Chad, Idriss Déby, who expressed concern over events in Libya, saying that "Al-Qaeda's Islamists exploited the robbing of the weapons arsenals in rebel territories, in order to equip themselves with weapons, including ground to air missiles that were later passed on to its strongholds in Ténéré [a part of the Sahara Desert in Chad's territory]".²⁵

The West and the rest of the world

Indonesia

- The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper quoted on March 31st 2011 a Reuters news report that an Indonesian named Umar Patek, a bomb manufacturer suspected of being involved in a terrorist attack at a club in Bali, Indonesia on 2002, killing 202 people, was arrested in Pakistan. Patek is suspected of joining Abu-Sayyaf's organization in the Philippines. It was further reported that he may have information on the nature of the ties between terrorist organizations in the Philippines and Indonesia, on the Indonesians and Malaysians still active in the Muslim Mindanao region in the Philippines, on terrorism financing in the area and the Pakistani connection to terrorism in South-East Asia.²⁶

²⁵ Al-Hayat, 26.2.2011: <http://international.daralhayat.com/>

²⁶ Al-Hayat, 31.3.2011: <http://www.aawsat.com/>