

Global Jihad: Summary of Information from Arabic Media Sources

The Second Half of May 2011

This report summarizes the most prominent articles on the subject of global Jihad published in the Arabic media in the second half of May 2011. Following are the main issues raised in this report:

- A wave of terrorist attacks in Pakistan – reports on a rise in the Taliban's capabilities in the country.
- A decline in the security situation in Iraq and a rise in the number of terrorist attacks perpetrated all over the country.
- Islamic militants identified with Al-Qaeda gained control of a number of cities in the Abyan Province in Yemen, including the capital Zinjibar. This occurred against a backdrop of increased protests against President Saleh, and following the opposition's accusations that Saleh is using Al-Qaeda and enabling the organization to operate freely.
- New appointments in Al-Qaeda following the death of Bin Laden.

Afghanistan – Pakistan

The Al-Qaeda leadership

- On May 18th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper published an interview with the American reporter and expert on terrorism, Peter Bergen. He contended that even before Bin Laden's assassination, the events of the Arab Spring had weakened Al-Qaeda's ideology. In his opinion, it was possible that certain groups in the organization might perpetrate revenge attacks against the United States, but that this will not be a significant problem. He believes that the war against terrorism is nearing its end and that Bin Laden's death has diminished the organization's importance. He believes that financing will not be a problem for the organization as Al-Qaeda activists do not receive salaries and its operations do not require significant funds. However, at present the organization is suffering and for ten years it has not succeeded in carrying out an attack on American soil. He also believes that the organization is losing support in its ideology, and that if Al-Zawahiri were to replace Bin Laden [this interview was conducted prior to the announcement] he will not have much influence, as he is not respected by the organization's men or even by the Egyptian Jihadi movement.¹
- The website of the "Al-Jazeera" network reported that the American "Sight" website said that it had located a tape by Bin Laden which was posted on the Jihadi sites after his death. In the tape Bin Laden supports the uprisings in the Arab states and calls for the downfall of other tyrants in the Islamic world.²

¹ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 18th 2011: www.aawsat.com

² Al-Jazeera, May 19th 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net>

- On May 18th 2011, the website of the "Al-Jazeera" network stated that Pakistani security sources had reported that Al-Qaeda had made a series of appointments in the organization. According to the report, Saif Al-Adl was temporarily appointed de-facto leader of the organization. Muhammad Mustafa Al-Yamani was appointed as Head of Operations, the Egyptian Adnan Al-Khairi was placed in charge of the General Headquarters, Muhammad Nasir Al-Wahshi was appointed commander of the organization in Africa, Muhammad Adam Khan was appointed leader of the organization on the Afghanistan-Pakistan borders, and Fahd Al-Iraqi was appointed as the organization's supervisor on the Afghanistan-Pakistan borders. According to the sources, the decisions were taken at a meeting held on May 10th 2011 at a location close to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Noman Benotman, a former associate of Bin Laden and now an analyst at the British Quilliam Foundation, said that Al-Adl's appointment was temporary and that he was responsible only for the military side of the organization. He also stated that the decision had not been taken at an official meeting of the organization's Shura Council, as such a meeting cannot be held at the present time. He surmised that at a later date, Ayman Al-Zawahiri would be appointed head of the organization.³
- On May 23rd 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that an internet site had published the first video tape of Ayman Al-Zawahiri since Bin Laden's assassination. In the tape, Al-Zawahiri discusses the situation in Libya and accuses NATO of trying to steal the country's natural resources. The site emphasized that the message was taped before Bin Laden's assassination.⁴

³ Al-Jazeera, May 18th 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net>

⁴ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 23rd 2011: www.aawsat.com

Afghanistan

- The terrorist attacks in Afghanistan continued in the second half of May 2011. On May 19th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the Afghan government's spokesperson announced that 13 people were killed in Jalalabad in an attack on a minibus transporting policemen who were undergoing training. A suicide bomber drove a car-bomb into the minibus.⁵ On May 24th 2011, the website of the "Al-Jazeera" network reported that 11 people were killed in an attack in which a bomb was detonated next to a truck carrying workers in the Kandahar region. The site also reported an attempted suicide attack on the Deputy Head of Afghan intelligence.⁶

Pakistan

- On May 17th 2011, the Saudi "Al-Watan" newspaper reported that the body of a Saudi diplomat, Hassan Al-Qahtani, was returned to Saudi Arabia. Al-Qahtani worked at the Saudi embassy in Karachi, Pakistan. He was killed in an attack the previous day when unknown assassins on motorcycles threw hand grenades at him while he was on his way to work.⁷
- The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the car bombs and the Taliban shootings in Pakistan continued. Senior Pakistani officials announced that a Yemeni Al-Qaeda mid-level activist called Muhammad Ali Qassim Yaaqub (aka Abu Suhaib Al-Makki), was arrested in the city of Karachi. He is an explosives expert who was involved in the planning of attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan and was in direct contact with the Al-Qaeda leadership.⁸

⁵ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 19th 2011: www.aawsat.com

⁶ Al-Jazeera, May 24th 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net>

⁷ Al-Watan, May 17th 2011: <http://www.alwatan.com.sa>

⁸ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 19th 2011: www.aawsat.com

- The Arab media reported on a large number of car bomb attacks in Pakistan which killed scores of people. The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that 36 people were killed in a Taliban attack on a building belonging to a construction company.⁹ The following day, the paper reported that 16 people were killed in two attacks in the tribal region of north-west Pakistan. In one attack, a small bomb was detonated when locals crowded around a NATO truck distributing fuel. The attack started a fuel leakage, and people hurried to collect the fuel pouring out of the container, which re-kindled the fire. The casualties included children who attempted to collect the fuel in buckets. In another attack, 11 NATO fuel trucks were destroyed after a bomb exploded underneath one of them. It is still unknown who was responsible for the attacks, but the article mentions that the Taliban's modus operandi is to attack NATO supply trucks.¹⁰ The website of the "Al-Jazeera" network reported that the Taliban movement in Pakistan claimed responsibility for an attack in which 25 people were killed in the north-west of Pakistan. In a telephone interview the movement's spokesperson, Ihsan Allah Ihsan, told the AP agency that his movement was responsible for the attack. The attack was revenge for Bin Laden's assassination, and he said that there would be further attacks. The "Al-Jazeera" network's reporter stated that the attack was carried out using a car carrying 200-300 kg of explosives, and that the goal was to kill the deputy commander of the regional police but, for reasons unknown, the terrorist detonated the bomb close to a government complex and a police center.¹¹

⁹ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 21st 2011: www.aawsat.com

¹⁰ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 22nd 2011: www.aawsat.com

¹¹ Al-Jazeera, May 26th 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net>

- On May 24th 2011, the website of the "Al-Jazeera" network published an analysis, based on a report by the Stratfor Institute, of the attack against the Mehran Pakistani naval base in Karachi which was carried out by the Taliban. The heavily guarded base was under attack for 17 hours. The analysis points to the fact that the attack was perpetrated in Karachi, far from the Taliban strongholds, and involved a direct assault on the base and was not a car bomb attack. The attack revealed that the Taliban was making use of intelligence which enabled them to take advantage of the element of surprise. All of the above point to a rise in the Taliban's capabilities.¹²
- The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported on May 21st 2011, that two people were killed in an attack against an American consulate vehicle in north-west Pakistan. The attack was carried out using a 50 kg bomb that was placed in a parked car, and was detonated using a remote detonator when the consulate vehicle passed by. An attack was carried out against a US consulate convoy in Peshawar a day previously. The Taliban spokesperson, Ihsan Allah Ihsan, declared that his movement was responsible for the attack and pledged that similar attacks would be carried out in all Pakistani cities.¹³

Iraq

- On May 17th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported a number of attacks which took place in Iraq. In one of the attacks an Iraqi citizen was killed and four people were wounded, including two Norwegians, when a bomb was detonated near a heavily-guarded convoy in Baghdad. The article also reported that the headless body of a Christian construction worker was found in Kirkuk on one of the main streets of the city. He had been abducted

¹² Al-Jazeera, May 24th 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net>

¹³ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 21st 2011: www.aawsat.com

a few days beforehand, and the kidnapers had demanded a ransom of US\$100,000 from his family. The regional police commander accused Al-Qaeda of the murder.¹⁴

- On May 17th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper, quoting the Reuters news agency, reported that senior Iraqi security personnel had revealed that the wave of attacks in recent months in Baghdad against senior and other officers which were perpetrated with guns with silencers and explosive devices, were not carried out by Al-Qaeda but by Shi'ite militias who feared the return of the Ba'ath Party. They also reported that the Shi'ite militias have penetrated the ranks of the police, the investigation departments, and that they even control the street cleaners.¹⁵
- On May 19th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that Iraqi authorities had arrested a senior member of Al-Qaeda in Iraq named Mukhlif Al-Azawi (aka Abu Radwan), and three other leaders of the organization. Those arrested included the person responsible for the attacks unit in the organization and another operative who was responsible for the attack in Salah Al-Din at the end of March in which 58 people were killed.¹⁶
- On May 19th 2011, the "Al-Jazeera" network's website reported three explosions in Kirkuk which resulted in the deaths of 28 people. The head of the province's council reported that the first explosion was caused by a bomb attached to the car of one of the security personnel. After the detonation of the first bomb, a car-bomb was detonated close to the first explosion, targeting the security forces surrounding the car. A second car-bomb was

¹⁴ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 17th 2011: www.aawsat.com

¹⁵ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 17th 2011: www.aawsat.com

¹⁶ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 19th 2011: www.aawsat.com

then detonated at the same location. The regional police commander accused Al-Qaeda of carrying out the triple attack.¹⁷

- On May 23rd 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that there were 18 casualties in a series of terrorist attacks carried out around Baghdad which included bombs, explosives belts and car-bombs. The paper reported on a rise in the number of violent attacks in Baghdad and other areas in Iraq over the previous weeks.¹⁸
- On May 29th 2011, the Iraqi "Al-Sabaah" newspaper reported that a fortnight previously, the Baghdad Operational Headquarters had arrested an Al-Qaeda network headed by Firas Falih. Falih was also the head of a human rights organization that demanded the release of prisoners. He was the head of a network of 34 men who were responsible for 15 terror attacks, the largest of which was at a wedding in 2006 and resulted in the deaths of 70 people. Falih admitted that he had been a member of the Al-Jaish Al-Islami organization until 2005 when he joined Al-Qaeda, and that he had taken part in the wedding attack. All of those present at the wedding were killed, including the women and children. The women were raped, including the bride in the presence of the groom, and then their bodies were thrown into a river.¹⁹

The Arabian Peninsula

Yemen

- On May 22nd 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that protests against the regime were continuing in Yemen, whilst attempts to mediate were being made by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The Yemeni

¹⁷ Al-Jazeera, May 19th 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net>

¹⁸ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 23rd 2011: www.aawsat.com

¹⁹ Al-Sabaah, May 29th 2011: <http://www.alsabaah.com>

President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, declared that the GCC's mediation efforts were an external conspiracy. However despite this, he agreed to cooperate with them because if he were to be deposed, Al-Qaeda would take over many regions in the country.²⁰

- On May 27th 2011, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported on fighting in the Abyan Province in the Arabian Peninsula between the Yemeni security forces and Al-Qaeda. There were rumors that Al-Qaeda had taken over the intelligence headquarters in Zinjibar²¹
- On May 29th 2011, the website of the "Al-Jazeera" network reported that Zinjibar had been taken over by armed men whom the government of Yemen claimed were Al-Qaeda militants. They also reported that thousands of citizens were evacuated from areas close to the city. One of the residents told "Al-Jazeera" that after they had completely taken over the capital Zinjibar, the militants had declared the Abyan Province to be an Islamic Emirate and that they intended to continue towards Aden. They also said that the militants had taken over other areas, including Jaar. The opposition accused the President of playing the terrorist card as a warning of what would happen if he were to be deposed, and that he is permitting the militants to do as they wish in order to cause panic.²² On May 30th 2011, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper added that the militants, who had taken over Zinjibar, belonged to Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and other Al-Qaeda elements. The militants were led by a local tribal leader called Bassam Bal'aidi, who was appointed Emir of the Islamic Zinjibar Emirate. Between 300 and 500 militants attacked the city from all sides and took arms and ammunition after breaking into the government headquarters and various security offices. The

²⁰ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 22nd 2011: www.aawsat.com

²¹ Al-Hayat, May 27th 2011: <http://www.daralhayat.com>

²² Al-Jazeera, May 29th 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net>

attackers drove through the city on military vehicles with loudspeakers playing Islamic Jihadi anthems, warning the population not to do anything which would result in them being harmed.²³

Saudi Arabia

- The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported on the start of the trial of the 11 people accused of involvement in the 2004 terrorist attack in Yanbu'. This is the first trial of Al-Qaeda operatives to take place in open court in Saudi Arabia.²⁴
- The Saudi "Al-Riyadh" newspaper reported that Abd Al-Mun'im Al-Mushawwah, the director of the Al-Sakina Campaign for reeducation in the Ministry of Islamic Affairs in Saudi Arabia, warned against the online terrorism being carried out by Al-Qaeda. He stated that Al-Qaeda had transferred its training camps from the field to the internet, and had established study institutes on the internet where students finish their studies within two years after undergoing training in the manufacturing of bombs and explosives. Al-Mushawwah stressed the importance of using the internet to advocate the building of a balanced and moderate Islamic identity, and he reviewed the campaign he was conducting in the field of reeducation of radicals who had advocated violent and extreme ideals²⁵.

²³ Al-Hayat, May 30th 2011: <http://www.daralhayat.com>

²⁴ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 17th 2011: www.aawsat.com

²⁵ Al-Riyadh, May 18th 2011: <http://www.alriyadh.com>

The Maghreb

The Sahel

- On May 21st 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the Foreign Ministers of Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, met in Bamako to discuss "Terrorism – Crime That Crosses Borders". Mali's Foreign Minister revealed that the four countries were establishing a joint force of 75,000 soldiers to secure the Sahel and the Sahara regions. The meeting was part of a series of meetings of top military personnel which were held as part of the Algerian-promoted efforts to create regional military cooperation in the war against terrorism.²⁶
- On May 22nd 2011, the Algerian "El-Khabar" newspaper reported that according to internet sources in the Sahel, Al-Qaeda had started to form units of black men in the west of the Sahel as part of the camouflage of operatives in face of the joint activity of Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger against the organization. According to a report on a Malian internet site, Al-Qaeda activists are using the weekly market in Timbuktu to meet Bedouins and local residents. According to the reports, the Al-Qaeda activists aggressively drive around the market places in vehicles laden with arms, whilst other activists go to the Bedouin enclaves in the area and recruit local men into the organization. The reports state that this is also done in the forests in Western Mali, approximately 50 km from the Mauritanian border. They also mention that the security situation is declining in Timbuktu, and it is becoming a "new Kandahar".²⁷

²⁶ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 21st 2011: www.aawsat.com

²⁷ El-Khabar, May 22nd 2011: <http://www.elkhabar.com>

- On May 20th 2011, the Algerian "El-Khabar" newspaper published a telephone interview conducted with Muhammad Dharif, a Moroccan researcher specializing in terrorism. The interview followed the quadruple meeting held between Algeria, Mali, Niger and Mauritania in Bamako, the capital of Mali. He said that the attack which occurred in Marrakesh at the end of April, showed the change in the way the Jihadi operations are conducted – moving from organized operations to individual ones. He mentioned that the security establishments have proof that the perpetrator acted without any connection to an organized entity. Dharif explained that it is easier for the security establishment to penetrate organized operations, and that it is much harder when the attacks are carried out by individuals. He also said that the situation in Libya was influencing the entire region. He stated that even if some of the LIFG members had renounced terrorism, others were still loyal to Al-Qaeda and it was relatively easy to transfer arms from Libya to the Al-Qaeda cells. Dharif also said that the countries in the region were afraid of a revenge attack for the death of Bin Laden, and it was possible that the four kidnapped Frenchmen would be the ones to pay the price.²⁸
- The "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported on an interview given by Bernard Squarcini to one of the French papers. Squarcini, head of the Central Directorate of Interior Intelligence in France (DCRI), stated that the Al-Qaeda organization in the Islamic Maghreb had considerable funds due to the ransom money which it received for hostages, and its smuggling activities. As a result, the organization has acquired advanced weaponry such as: G.P.S. instruments, coded two-way radios, night-vision instruments and

²⁸ El-Khabar, May 20th 2011: <http://www.elkhabar.com>

vehicles. He also stated that the organization had recruited additional activists and constitutes a threat to French targets outside of France.²⁹

Algeria

- The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the army and the Algerian President, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, intended to pardon prisoners who were convicted of terrorism. The article states that in 2006, 2200 prisoners were released within the framework of the Appeasement Law in Algeria and that security reports state that many of those released returned to terrorist activity.³⁰

Egypt

- On May 29th 2011, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper published an article by Hani Masira which exposed the lack of consistency in the Salafists' positions in Egypt. He contends that the Salafists, who opposed political organizations, are now forming such an organization which is a partner in the political process that the Salafi movement has been avoiding. Their position regarding Al-Qaeda has also changed - they eulogized Bin Laden after his death and described him as a Mujahid and a Shahid, in contrast to Salafi clerics outside Egypt. Furthermore, they are partners in the ethnic struggle and in the increasing tension between the Muslims and the Coptic minority in Egypt, a conflict which they avoided before the uprising. Masira summarizes and claims that the uprising in Egypt has provided the Salafists with momentum and the ability to incite as part of the Da'awa.³¹

²⁹ El-Khabar, May 22nd 2011: <http://www.daralhayat.com>

³⁰ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 17th 2011: www.aawsat.com

³¹ Al-Hayat, May 29th 2011: <http://www.daralhayat.com>

Africa

Somalia

- In the second half of May, the website of the "Al-Jazeera" network reported that there was continued fighting in the Somali capital Mogadishu, between Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, and the Somali forces and the African Union peacekeeping forces. According to the reports, many civilians were killed, particularly in the Bakara market area.³² On May 30th 2011, the site also reported that the Somali President accused Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen and Al-Qaeda of holding beliefs which went against the values of Islam. In light of these declarations, the spokesman of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, Sheikh Ali Mahmud Raghi, declared that the campaign waged by the government and African Union forces, was a campaign against the Islamic Sharia. He stated that the campaign was destined to fail because the Al-Shabab movement would never consent to a system in Somalia which was not that of the Islamic Sharia, and that Mogadishu would become a graveyard and hell for the African forces, just as it was for the American and Ethiopian forces.³³
- On May 31st 2011, the website of the "Al-Jazeera" network reported that two Ugandan soldiers were killed in the attack perpetrated by the Al-Shabab movement in Mogadishu. The attack was carried out at an African Forces base by Al-Shabab operatives wearing Somali army uniforms. Fighting broke out between the attackers and the guards at the base, and one of the attackers detonated the explosives belt he was wearing.³⁴

³² Al-Jazeera, May 21st, May 23rd, 26th 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net>

³³ Al-Jazeera, May 30th 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net>

³⁴ Al-Jazeera, May 31st 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net>

Senegal

- On May 21st 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper stated that the Senegalese authorities had arrested a Senegal citizen who also held British citizenship, suspected of involvement in financing terrorism and in money laundering. He was also in regular contact with a British extremist.³⁵

³⁵ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, May 21st 2011: www.aawsat.com