

Global Jihad: Summary of Information from Arabic Media Sources

The First Half of July 2011

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

- 25 casualties in a triple terrorist attack in India.
- Many terrorist attacks all over Iraq claim the lives of many civilians. The Arab press reports on an escalation in the state of security in Iraq and the increase in terrorist attacks around the country. The report is backed by quantitative data.
- The Yemeni army suffers defeat against Al-Qaeda armed operatives who expelled its forces from a stadium serving as a large supply warehouse. The remnants of the defeated army fled to Aden, 50 soldiers are missing.
- An Al-Qaeda terrorist attack against the Mauritanian army in retaliation to the military operation deep in Mali territory at the end of the previous month. The Al-Jazeera network's website analyzes Mauritania's motives in its war against the organization.

General

- The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper published an interview with Daniel Benjamin, Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the Department of State. Benjamin stated that Bin Laden was involved in managing the organization's day-to-day affairs more than was believed, and that his death has definitely impaired the organization's capabilities. In addition, Fazul Abdullah, one of the organization's senior members in East Africa was killed. He further said that the Arab Spring revolutions will uproot the appeal of radical Islam. He added that Al-Qaeda has no important role in the Arab Spring, which is a painful slap in the face for the organization.¹

Pakistan

- On July 4th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper published an interview with the Pakistani Minister of Interior, Rahman Malik. In the interview, the minister revealed that 1,100 terrorist attacks were foiled in Pakistan over the past three years. He further said that the Pakistani security forces have thwarted 5-6 terrorist attacks every week since the death of Bin Laden. One of the terrorist attacks that was prevented was an assassination attempt on the country's president while he was visiting his father at the hospital.²

India

- On July 14th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that 25 people were killed in a triple terrorist attack in Mumbai, India. Three explosions occurred over the course of 30 minutes. The newspaper reported

¹ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, July 3rd 2011, www.aawsat.com

² Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, July 4th 2011, www.aawsat.com

that senior security forces revealed that the attacks have the fingerprints of the Pakistani Lashkar-e-Taiba organization.³

Iraq

- On July 4th 2011, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported that concern is rising in the Al-Anbar Province in Iraq following the deterioration in the state of security. The Al-Anbar Province Governor told "Al-Hayat" that intelligence points to the infiltration of Al-Qaeda elements into the province who wish to carry out terrorist attacks, especially against police personnel and clerics. It was further noted that between 2006 and 2007, Al-Qaeda completely ruled the province until the Awakening Councils succeeded in purging the province from Al-Qaeda elements. The article further reveals that terrorist attacks continue to claim lives in Al-Anbar, Baghdad, Mosul and Kirkuk.⁴
- On July 6th 2011, the Iraqi "Al-Sabaah" newspaper reported on a double terrorist attack on the main road near the city council of Taji in Baghdad. According to the report, the first detonation was on the main road, using a car bomb. When the police patrols and other civilians arrived at the detonation site, a second suicide bomber detonated the explosive belt he was wearing.⁵ The Iraqi "Al-Sumaria News" news website reported on July 5th 2011 that a police source told the website that 30 people were killed in the terrorist attack, and another 60 were injured. The website further reported that since March there has been an escalation in the terrorist attacks in Baghdad and in other provinces in Iraq, while in the country there is a

³ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, July 14th 2011, www.aawsat.com

⁴ Al-Hayat, July 4th 2011, <http://international.daralhayat.com>

⁵ Al-Sabaah, July 6th 2011, <http://www.alsabaah.com>

political crisis and a lack of success in forming a government and appointing ministers responsible for the security ministries.⁶

- On July 8th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported on the apprehension of an Al-Qaeda cell which was carrying out assassinations in Baghdad using silencers. The Baghdad Operations Headquarters' spokesperson reported that the cell members admitted to the assassinations. He further said that Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for over 60 assassinations over the previous two months, most of them against security personnel, following two opinion papers published on the "Hanein" website. The article further reported that the number of casualties in the terrorist attack in Taji had risen to 35 and that the terrorist attacks have escalated over the previous weeks. It was also reported that June was the most violent month since the beginning of 2011, and that 271 people were killed, including 155 civilians, 77 policemen and 39 soldiers.⁷
- The Iraqi "Al-Sabaah" newspaper reported that joint Iraqi military and police forces together with the American forces, have succeeded in arresting 19 people wanted by the authorities, including Al-Qaeda commanders, over the course of several raids around the country. Twenty two barrels of TNT were seized in Mosul.⁸

The Arabian Peninsula

Yemen

- On July 11th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that armed forces whom the Yemen authorities claim belong to Al-Qaeda, succeeded in taking over a sports stadium outside of Zinjibar, capital of the Abyan

⁶ Al-Sumaria News, July 5th 2011, <http://www.alsumarianews.com>

⁷ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, July 8th 2011, www.aawsat.com

⁸ Al-Sabaah, July 11th 2011, <http://www.alsabaah.com>

Province, after a battle with Yemeni troops. The stadium served as a weapon, ammunition and food warehouse for the army and is considered to have great strategic value as it is near an army base and is used as a warehouse for some 2,000 soldiers. In the battle over the stadium, 20 soldiers and 11 armed men were killed. The armed men used assault rifles, Katyusha rockets and shells. It was further reported that the Yemen military forces are surrounded on the outskirts of Zinjibar, and have been fighting for several weeks.⁹ The "Al-Hayat" newspaper quoted a French news agency on July 3rd 2011, saying that as a result of the fighting in Abyan, 50 soldiers were missing, and it is not known whether they were taken hostage, executed or whether they joined the armed men.¹⁰ On July 4th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the 25th Mechanized Brigade of the Yemen army suffered defeat in the battle against the armed men in the Abyan Province and that its supply has been cut off. It was further reported that the brigade commanders and officers fled to Aden after the stadium takeover and that they sent an urgent plea for help to the Ministry of Defense.¹¹ On July 6th 2011, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported that Yemen army forces have bombed armed Al-Qaeda operatives barricading themselves in Zinjibar, using the air force and the navy and that dozens of Al-Qaeda operatives were killed in the bombings.¹²

Saudi Arabia

- On July 4th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that Saudi Arabia has indicted 15 men suspected of being involved in the bombings in

⁹ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, July 1st 2011, www.aawsat.com

¹⁰ Al-Hayat, July 3rd 2011, <http://international.daralhayat.com>

¹¹ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, July 4th 2011, www.aawsat.com

¹² Al-Hayat, July 6th 2011, <http://international.daralhayat.com>

Riyadh in May 2003, killing 239 people. The 15 were part of an 85 man cell through which Al-Qaeda has begun its activity in Saudi Arabia. Charges included: spying for Al-Qaeda, belonging to a terrorist cell, carrying out terror activity, publishing a list of names of security personnel with the aim of attacking them, Takfir activity, terror financing, use of mosques to hide equipment for the manufacturing of explosives, and more.¹³ The "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported, on July 5th 2011, that three of the defendants admitted to taking part in the blowing up of three residential buildings. One of them worked as the guidance and Da'awa manager at the National Guard encouraging one of the perpetrators of the attack to execute the terrorist plan and prepared shelter for the operatives after the execution of the attacks. Furthermore, he prepared the escape of the organization members to Iraq and was commander of one of the cells, headed by Turki Al-Dandani, a former leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.¹⁴

- On July 13th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported on the indictment of 16 people in Saudi Arabia, charged with founding a secret organization whose aim was to take over the country. The organization members are charged with financing Al-Qaeda activity, of meeting Al-Qaeda operatives in Iraq arriving in Saudi Arabia using the Hajj, of collaborating with foreign intelligence services, financing terrorism, founding an organization named "Mashru' Al-Jil" which raised donations under the guise of a welfare organization, of seducing young Saudi men and dragging them to conflict regions, of spreading hostility against the country, forming a fighting organization in Iraq and more.¹⁵

¹³ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, July 3rd 2011, www.aawsat.com

¹⁴ Al-Hayat, July 5th 2011, <http://ksa.daralhayat.com>

¹⁵ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, July 13th 2011, www.aawsat.com

The Maghreb

The Maghreb - general

- On July 1st 2011, the Algerian "Al-Khabar" newspaper reported that the G6 European Ministers of Interior [Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Spain and Poland], together with their American colleagues, declared that the weapon smuggling of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb must be stopped. The Spanish Minister of Interior pointed to the fact that gunrunning exists on the border between Libya and Mali and that inevitably Al-Qaeda will operate "out of its natural habitat" [alluding to the fact that Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb will also operate in Europe]. The article reports that Algeria has warned against the leaking of weapons to the organization following the riots in Libya, but that up until now there has been no serious attention given to the warnings coming from Algeria.¹⁶

Mauritania

- On July 7th 2011 the "Al-Hayat" newspaper, quoting the AFP news agency, reported that Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb attacked an anti-terrorist force belonging to the Mauritanian army near the border with Mali, in retaliation to the Mauritanian attack on the organization 10 days previously.¹⁷ The Nouakchott News Agency reported that Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb has claimed responsibility for the attack and has announced that two of its operatives were killed in the attack. The agency further reported that dozens of Al-Qaeda operatives participated in the attack against the military base.¹⁸ The "Al-Jazeera" network's website reported that the Mauritanian forces anticipated the Al-Qaeda attack and knew of it beforehand, and that thus the

¹⁶ Al-Khabar, July 1st 2011, <http://www.elkhabar.com>

¹⁷ Al-Hayat, July 7th 2011, <http://international.daralhayat.com>

¹⁸ The Nouakchott News Agency, July 6th 2011, <http://www.ani.mr>

organization has lost the element of surprise necessary for guerilla warfare. Furthermore, the Mauritanian army used the air force and moved the conflict deep into Malian territory. It was further reported that the Malian army went on alert following the events.¹⁹

- On July 10th 2011, the "Al-Jazeera" Research center published an article on Mauritania's war against Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. The article reports that on June 24th 2011, the Mauritanian army launched an attack on Al-Qaeda operatives fortified in the Wagadu Forest spread over 80 x 40 kilometers in Mali, near the border with Mauritania. Sources in Mali said that the military operation was conducted in collaboration with the Mali army, but that the latter's role was limited to securing the forest's southern border and preventing the infiltration of Al-Qaeda operatives through it. The article further notes that there were reports on American logistical aid and support given to the operation and on French intelligence aid. The article notes that this is the third time the Mauritania army has conducted an attack deep in Mali territory against Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and that collaboration between the Malian and Mauritanian forces in respect of an attack on the organization has been discussed in the past.

The article attempts to answer the question of "What is the Mauritanian army trying to achieve in the attack in the Wagadu Forest and what are the military implications of this attack outside of the country borders?". The article explains that Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb is operating directly in Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Algeria. These countries are spread over an extensive area, including the vast territories of the barren Sahara, are sparse in population, and connect the Arabic speaking Africans and the non-Arabic

¹⁹ Al-Jazeera, July 7th 2011, <http://aljazeera.net>

speaking Africans. Except for Algeria, the other three countries are also amongst of the poorest countries in the world with a fragile political structure and with problems in imposing their authority over their vast territory. Of the four countries, Mauritania is the only one waging its war against Al-Qaeda outside its sovereign territory. The article further notes that Al-Qaeda is forced to concentrate its forces in Mali, and to a lesser degree in Niger, although according to its statements, its interest centers on the five Maghreb states [Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya and Mauritania]. From these five countries, Algeria is the only one waging an overt military war against Al-Qaeda, but unlike Mauritania, it doesn't do so outside of its territory.

The article states that opposition forces in Mauritania claim that since August 2010, when Mauritania attacked Al-Qaeda forces together with France, it has been waging a proxy war against Al-Qaeda on behalf of the West, and that Mauritania should not take part in this war and be a pawn in it like Niger and Mali. The article claims that there is no doubt the current conflict between Mauritania and Al-Qaeda awards Mauritania with western support and an advanced level of collaboration with French and American intelligence. The article asks whether the support Mauritania receives from the US and France makes up for what Mauritania is losing as a result of the war, and why don't Niger and Mali demonstrate enthusiasm in their war against the organization. The article explains that Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb does not attack Mali and Niger and their armies, and does not demand anything of them except for neutrality in the conflict. The article further explains that Mali is not harmed by Al-Qaeda's presence in its territory, which it does not control anyway, and that the presence of armed groups there enables the development of an alternative economy that allows the tribes who in the past

bore arms against the central government, to ignore it. The same goes for Niger. The article further explains that unlike Mali and Niger where the groups belonging to Al-Qaeda are focusing mainly on attacking western targets, in Mauritania Al-Qaeda's main activity focuses on terrorist attacks against the army, and in most cases not against civilians, and that it is undermining the government's stability. The article claims that the attack against the Al-Qaeda forces in the Wagadu Forest is a preventive attack with a dual purpose: on the one hand its goal is to prevent the creation of Al-Qaeda military centers on the Mauritania border from the south and from the south-east, and on the other hand to prevent the accumulation of advanced weapons the organization has succeeded in appropriating following the deterioration in the state of security in Libya.

In addition, Mauritania is trying to give the reins and initiative over to the Mauritanian army, following reports on Al-Qaeda obtaining Russian and American ground-to-air missiles. The article notes that another cause for the military attacks on Al-Qaeda is the concern over the consequences the organization's terrorist attacks have on the government's strength, following the operational abilities the organization has displayed in recent years and the fact that it has succeeded in recruiting many of Mauritania's youth. The article also notes that the relationship triangle between the deposed Mauritanian president, Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, and Al-Qaeda and the Polisario forces in the region, is complicating the balance of power in the area.

The article concludes by saying that the future of the campaign between the Mauritanian army and Al-Qaeda is unclear. The western support given to Mauritania is insufficient and does not compensate for its losses in lives and

money caused by the campaign; the struggles and the fragile balance between the countries in the Sahara region and the conflict with the Tuareg Tribes do not allow for serious coordination between the region's countries on the political and military level. It is possible that Mauritania will succeed in achieving a Hudna (truce) or some agreement, whether overt or secret [apparently with Al-Qaeda]; however the current regional and global balance of power makes it difficult to reach such a Hudna, requiring efforts exceeding the tactics currently implemented.²⁰

- On July 14th 2011, the "Al-Jazeera" network's website published an article titled "Is Mauritania waging a proxy war?". The article presents the meetings on the political and military level between Mauritania and France and the statements made by the Foreign Minister on Mauritania's performance in the war on terrorism in light of the attacks in Mali. The article quotes the Mauritanian member of the opposition, Muhammad Al-Mustafa Badr Al-Din, who said that these meetings [between Mauritania and French senior figures] leave no room for doubt that the Mauritania government "is nothing more than a pawn at the hands of the French and the Americans which they use whenever they wish for a war they themselves have failed in". He adds that the Americans are on the brink of retreating from Iraq and that they have given up on defeating these armed organizations; the French too are preparing to retreat from Afghanistan. While the countries in the region refused to enter into a proxy war for the West, the Mauritanian government ignored all this and entered into a proxy war on behalf of the West in order to gain their sympathy and collaboration. Senior political figures in Mauritania told "Al-Jazeera" that the opposition's statements are "a knife in the back" of

²⁰ Al-Jazeera, July 10th 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.net>

the nation and that Mauritania is waging a war over its borders against an enemy waiting for an opportunity to strike at its security.²¹

Tunisia

- On July 3rd 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the Tunisian Ministry of Interior announced on the previous Friday that unusual security measures will be taken during the tourist season in the summer, following rumors on attacks on the part of radical Islamists. It was further reported that the civilian society and the political parties expressed concern over the spreading of the Islamic movement in Tunisia, following the terrorist attack at a cinema showing a film by a female Tunisian director on the secularization process the Tunisian society is undergoing and a terrorist attack perpetrated by Salafis against lawyers the previous week.²²

The West and the rest of the world

Britain

- On July 14th 2011, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper, quoting the Daily Mail newspaper, reported that Al-Qaeda has increased its activity on the internet as a platform for promoting the preaching encouraging individual terrorist attacks, following Bin Laden's death. It was further reported that Al-Qaeda operatives are making increased use of the social networks and in particular of Facebook and Twitter.²³

²¹ Al-Jazeera, July 14th 2011, <http://aljazeera.net>

²² Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, July 3rd 2011, www.aawsat.com

²³ Al-Hayat, July 14th 2011, <http://ksa.daralhayat.com>