

Global Jihad: Summary of Information from Arabic Media Sources

The Second Half of June 2011

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

Following are the main issues raised in this report:

- Ayman Al-Zawahiri is officially declared as Al-Qaeda's leader to replace Osama bin Laden. Al-Qaeda promises that Jihad will continue until the Day of Resurrection. Commentators from the Arab world explain that Al-Zawahiri taught Bin Laden the ways of combative Jihad, and that he was the one who actually ran the organization. They predict that the organization will carry out an operation to establish the position of its new leader.
- Continued waves of terrorism in Iraq and Pakistan.
- The armed confrontations between armed operatives from Al-Qaeda and the Yemeni army continue in the Abyan Province, which Al-Qaeda has declared to be an Islamic emirate. The confrontations spread to the Lahij Province as well. Opposition elements continue to claim that this is a deliberate action taken by the authorities.
- Mauritania carries out a military operation deep inside Malian territory against an Al-Qaeda base in the Wagadu Forest.
- The Somali Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen movement gives its support to Ayman Al-Zawahiri, and acts to reinforce its position amongst the elders of the local tribes in the various provinces of Somalia.

Afghanistan-Pakistan

The Al-Qaeda leadership

- On June 17th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that Ayman Al-Zawahiri is Osama bin Laden's replacement. In a manifesto published by the "Al-Fajr" media center and distributed to Jihadi websites, it was stated that after holding a consultation, the general leadership of the Qaedat Al-Jihad organization declared Ayman Al-Zawahiri to be the organization's emir. It was further noted that the Jihad will continue until the Day of Resurrection and that it is a personal duty to act against the heretics, those invading and occupying Muslim countries, and against the rulers who recanted Islam. The organization promised to continue the Jihad against the West using every means available.

Muntasar Al-Ziat, a lawyer for the Jema'ah Islamiyya organizations, told "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" that Ayman Al-Zawahiri taught Bin Laden the rules of combative Jihad, and that he was Bin Laden's "brain", as well as the no. 2 man in the organization. He further added that when Al-Zawahiri founded Jema'ah Islamiyya in Egypt, he appointed Sheikh Imam Bin Abd Al-Aziz to be the leader of the organization, but that everyone knew that he was the organization's emir in actuality.

Al-Ziat denied there were any disagreements within Al-Qaeda regarding Al-Zawahiri's appointment. He further stated that it is possible that Al-Zawahiri is less "photogenic" than Bin Laden, but he does not operate alone and does not ignore the Shura's opinion.

Al-Ziat analyzed Al-Zawahiri's latest tape and noted that until now Al-Zawahiri issued the threats whilst Bin Laden's discourse was calmer and produced initiatives towards the West. However, in the last tape it is

apparent that Al-Zawahiri's calm tone is an attempt to create harmony with the revolutions in the Arab world. Kamal Habib, former leader of the Jihad organization, told "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" he believes Al-Zawahiri will try to reunite Al-Qaeda and unite his ideas by emphasizing the organization's Salafi aspect and by returning to the older religious clerics [no further detail is provided], after some people scattered and went too far with the idea of takfir and the use of violence. He further added that the challenge facing Al-Zawahiri is the new model for change presented by young Arabs, and that Al-Qaeda is not the only idea in the Arab theater. Dr. Nabil Al-Fatah, an expert on Islamic organizations, told "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" that Al-Zawahiri "is the one who in actuality managed the organization when Bin Laden was present, and needs now to declare himself as a leader by way of a large scale terrorist attack, to reinforce his position at the head of the organization and in order to build his ties with the sleeper cells as well as with the active cells".¹

- On June 30th 2011, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported that the Egyptian Colonel Muhammad Ibrahim Makkawi, sent a letter to the paper accusing Saif Al-Adl, a senior Al-Qaeda member, of stealing his identity, and also claiming that the FBI is confused between the two.²

Pakistan

- On June 27th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that two people carried out a terrorist attack at a police center close to the Waziristan region. The two broke into the center, shooting and throwing hand grenades. Afterwards, they took dozens of policemen hostage for several hours and then detonated the explosives they were carrying. Twelve security personnel

¹ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 17th 2011: www.aawsat.com

² Al-Hayat, June 30th 2011: <http://www.daralhayat.com>

were killed in the attack. It was further noted that the Taliban does not usually use women in suicide bombings, and that the Taliban–Pakistan spokesman claimed responsibility for the attack. He declared that it was carried out in revenge for Bin Laden's death and for the government's activities against the fighters.³

Iraq

- On June 21st 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported on a number of terrorist attacks, including the detonation of a roadside charge next to a convoy from the French embassy in Baghdad, as well as other attacks on security personnel.⁴
- On June 22nd 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported a terrorist attack in the center of the country in the city of Diwaniya. The attack, using two car bombs, was carried out at the house of the Governor of Diwaniya Province at the time that he was supposed to leave his house. Twenty six people were killed in the attack, the majority of them policemen.⁵
- On June 26th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that a group of supporters of the Shiite leader, Muqtada Al-Sadr, expressed their willingness to carry out suicide attacks against the American forces whom they called "the heretic occupation". The operatives declared their intentions in a manifesto distributed in the city of Najaf. They said they were willing to carry out suicide attacks, particularly against the heretic occupier, in order to protect Islam and Iraq, but without harming civilians or public and private

³ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 27th 2011: www.aawsat.com

⁴ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 21st 2011: <http://www.aawsat.com>

⁵ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 22nd 2011: www.aawsat.com

property. The article notes that in August 2007, Al-Sadr decided to freeze the activities of the Jaish Al-Mahdi militia.⁶

The Arabian Peninsula

Yemen

- On June 16th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that armed men invaded Al-Hawta, the capital of the Lahij Province. The men attacked the headquarters of the security forces in the city and succeeded in taking over security and government buildings. The attacks in Al-Hawta were similar to the ones carried out in Zinjibar. The Yemeni government claimed that it is Al-Qaeda operatives carrying out the attacks, but opposition elements continue to claim that these operations are initiated by the Yemen government. The claim is that the government wishes to signal to other countries, and mainly the West, that Al-Qaeda is the alternative to the current regime.⁷
- On June 18th 2011, the website of the Al-Jazeera network reported that some continue to doubt the Yemeni government's claims that the elements that took over the city of Zinjibar in the Abyan Province are Al-Qaeda elements. Recently, the armed men that took over the city distributed a manifesto in the name of the "Ansar Al-Shari'a" organization (the Supporters of Islamic Sharia). Faris Ghanim, a researcher specializing in terrorism and manager of the "Al-Yaman" newspaper, told the website of the Al-Jazeera network that apparently this group is more like the "death squads" established by the government, used against the separatist party of the south in recent years. Ghanim claims that the language used in the manifesto is different to that

⁶ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 26th 2011: www.aawsat.com

⁷ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 16th 2011: www.aawsat.com

used by Al-Qaeda. In the manifesto published by the organization, a financial reward was offered to anyone providing information on military figures in Yemen that led to their capture and killing. According to the testimony of locals, some of the armed men that took over Zinjibar spoke in Egyptian, Saudi and Somali dialects. It was further reported that the armed men are moving around in groups of 15, with a commander for each group.

- On June 20th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the fighting in the Abyan Province and in the province capital, Zinjibar, continues. Yemeni government elements note that the rebel forces number 2,000 people, and that there are fighters from Bangladesh, Palestine, Syria, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and other places amongst the forces fighting alongside Al-Qaeda.⁸
- The conflicts in southern Yemen between the security forces and the armed men who authorities claim belong to Al-Qaeda, continued throughout the second half of June 2011 and claimed the lives of dozens of men. Meanwhile, the authorities in Yemen declared that they foiled an Al-Qaeda terrorist attack in Aden.⁹

Saudi Arabia

- On June 27th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the trial began of the members of a terrorist cell accused of carrying out acts of terrorism, of spying for Al-Qaeda, and of secreting and smuggling wanted men. The defendants are accused of carrying out the terrorist attack in February 2003 which killed two security personnel, and of providing information to Al-Qaeda. Three out of the ten defendants are accused of

⁸ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 20th 2011: www.aawsat.com

⁹ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 27th, 28th and 30th 2011: www.aawsat.com

providing security information to the cell members and for forewarning the wanted men in the organization. At the time these men were security personnel, and thus exploiting their positions. Some of the defendants joined Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, swearing their allegiance to Osama bin Laden and undergoing military training.¹⁰

The Maghreb

Mauritania

- On June 26th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the Mauritanian army launched a military operation against Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, deep within Malian territory. According to the army's reports, the organization's base in the Wagadu Forest in western Mali was destroyed.¹¹ Meanwhile, the "Al-Jazeera" network's website reported that opposition elements in Mauritania have undermined the operation's legitimacy as it was carried out by the Mauritanian army on foreign soil, without the collaboration of the region's countries.¹²

Morocco

- On June 29th 2011, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that in Marrakesh, the trial was about to begin of Adel Al-Uthmani and that of eight other people accused of helping Al-Uthmani in the execution of the terrorist attack at a café in Marrakesh at the end of April, causing the death of 17 people. Al-Uthmani entered the café wearing a wig and carrying a guitar as a disguise. He ordered lemonade, and then left the café before remotely detonating the charge he placed in a bag, using a cell phone. The other

¹⁰ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 27th 2011: www.aawsat.com

¹¹ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 26th 2011: www.aawsat.com

¹² Al-Jazeera, June 28th 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net>

defendants are accused of aiding him in the execution of the terrorist attack, with some providing him with information to help him. The Moroccan Ministry of Interior stated that Al-Uthmani "is saturated with Al-Qaeda ideology" and that he will be accused of belonging to Al-Qaeda. However, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb denies having any connection to the attack.¹³

Somalia

- On June 16th 2011, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper, according to information reaching the paper from Somali sources, boasted that it had exposed the circumstances of the death of Fazul Abdullah Muhammad, a senior member of Al-Qaeda in East Africa. Muhammad was accused of involvement in the terrorist attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. According to the reports, he was killed by accident after being pulled over for speeding by a Somali policeman. The policeman ordered the driver sitting next to Muhammad to turn off the front lights and to turn on the lights inside the car. An argument developed between the policeman and the two as they both refused to comply with his demands. The driver pulled out a gun and tried to shoot he policeman but the gun was locked, and at this point the policeman managed to shoot the driver and Muhammad. The commander of the police unit ordered the policeman and his colleagues not to come near the car until morning, and when they examined the vehicle they discovered the bodies of the driver and Muhammad. Police further discovered that the vehicle's rear doors were open, arousing the suspicion that there were other operatives who managed to escape.¹⁴

¹³ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 29th 2011: www.aawsat.com

¹⁴ Al-Hayat, June 16th 2011: <http://www.daralhayat.com>

- On June 17th 2011, the "Al-Jazeera" network's website reported that the Somali Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen movement welcomed Ayman Al-Zawahiri's appointment as Al-Qaeda's commander. The organization's spokesperson, Sheikh Ali Mahmud Raghi, called on Al-Zawahiri to adhere to the Jihadi line his predecessor took, and stressed that his movement will stand alongside Al-Zawahiri and support him.¹⁵
- The website of the "Al-Jazeera" network reported that the Somali Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen movement held training for the tribes in the Bay and Bakool Provinces, in addition to lessons in Islamic Sharia. The website reported that the movement's spokesman said that the Al-Shabab movement considers the tribes' sheikhs as part of the nation's leaders and praised them for sending their sons to the fighting arenas. He called on the sheikhs of tribes in other regions in Somalia to do the same. One of these tribes' sheikhs, Sultan Sidi Haji Muhammad, promised to stand alongside the Al-Shabab fighters in their struggle against the government forces and the African Union Forces, and noted that the Al-Shabab movement has brought security and stability to the region. He further added that all of the region's tribes represent Osama bin Laden, and are ready to walk in his path, meaning – Jihad against the enemies of Islam.¹⁶

¹⁵ Al-Jazeera, June 17th 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net>

¹⁶ Al-Jazeera, June 30th 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.net>