

## Global Jihad: Summary of Information from Arabic Media Sources

### The Second Half of December 2010

This report summarizes the most prominent articles published in the Arabic media on the subject of global Jihad over the course of the second half of December 2010. Following is a summary of the main issues raised in this report:

- Detailed reports were published in the Arabic media on terror activities in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq.
- Reports were published regarding attempts to form Jihadi cells in the United Arab Emirates.
- The "Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen" movement and the Islamic Party in Somalia merged; the newly joined party threatened to perpetrate attacks in Somalia's neighboring African states.

## Afghanistan – Pakistan

### Afghanistan

- On December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the “Al-Hayat” newspaper reported that four Turkish engineers had been kidnapped in the Paktika region in East Afghanistan. They were abducted while paving a road in the area. The Paktika area is considered to be the region of the Haqqani activists, who are allies of the Taliban.<sup>1</sup>

**The Al-Haqqani network is a terrorist organization operating in tribal areas in East Afghanistan, including the Paktia, Paktika, Khost, Ghazni and Wardak regions, as well as in a small part of Kabul. The group is led by Jalaluddin Haqqani, the former commander of the resistance forces during the Afghan Soviet War and one of the leaders and founders of Hezb-e Islami. Haqqani had strong ties with bin Laden in the 1980s. Today, he heads a network of training camps for Afghans and foreigners in the north and south of Waziristan.<sup>2</sup>**

### Pakistan

- On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, the “Al-Sharq Al-Awsat” newspaper reported that, according to the Al-Marsad Al-I'lami Al-Islami website (Islamic Informative Observatory), Mahmud Abu Rida, whose alias is Abu Rasmi Al-Filastini, was recently killed during an American air strike in Afghanistan.  
Abu Rida moved to Britain in 1995. Following the 9/11 attacks, he was incarcerated without ever being sentenced from December 2001 to March 2005 under the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. After his period

<sup>1</sup> <http://ksa.daralhayat.com>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.understandingwar.org/themenode/haqqani-network>

of incarceration, he left for Syria and thereafter to Egypt and Gaza. He then returned to Syria and from there moved to Iran, where he was again arrested. After his release, he left for Afghanistan, where he was killed.

The article quoted from Jihadi websites, which claim Abu Rida had strong ties to Al-Qaeda's no. 2 man, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, as well as to the leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi.

While residing in Britain, Abu Rida was interviewed twice by the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper. In these interviews, he stated that he had helped the Afghans by opening a school in Afghanistan. According to a letter sent from Al-Zawahiri to Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi in 2005, Zawahiri's book "Knights under the Prophet's Banner" was sent to Abu Rida for distribution.

In 2001, Abu Rida was arrested in Britain. The British immigration officials claimed he was supporting international terror groups, including Al-Qaeda. The main accusations against him were that he had collected money and distributed it among the Al-Qaeda networks and that he had obtained forged documents in order to aid volunteers seeking to train in Afghanistan. According to the article, Abu Rida suffered from mental problems including depression.<sup>3</sup>

- On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Jazeera" TV station reported that American UAV air strikes were continuing and that, since the beginning of the year, there had been over 100 attacks. Moreover, the reporters claimed that the UAV strikes had increased in frequency since Barack Obama became President.<sup>4</sup>
- On December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported that at least 42 people, most of whom were women and elderly, were killed in a suicide

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.net>

bombing in Khar in the Bajur region of Northwest Pakistan. The attack was perpetrated by a suicide bomber disguised in woman's clothing. The suicide bomber blended in with a group of people gathered outside the warehouses of the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) to receive their monthly aid. The attack occurred after the army had finally permitted the residents to return to this area from which they had fled the previous year following the military operations against the Taliban in Pakistan.

The security authorities did not explain how the bomber managed to pass through the roadblocks and security measures surrounding the WFP center unnoticed. However, according to experts on tribal matters, "the tribal traditions, the character of the conservative society in the region and the disguise of the perpetrator who was dressed as a woman – all of these factors facilitated the bomber's access to the center without his explosives belt being detected".<sup>5</sup>

The same day, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper also published an article on the attack. The article stated that it was not yet clear whether the perpetrator was a woman or a man disguised as a woman, and that the suicide bomber had thrown hand grenades into the crowd before blowing himself up.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" article reported the arrest by the Pakistani authorities of Dr. Naseer, the son of Jalaluddin Al-Haqqani. Naseer and his sons were charged with leading the resistance network against the American forces in eastern Afghanistan. According to Afghan sources, Naseer was accused of raising funds for the Al-Haqqani network and the Afghan resistance. Afghan sources claimed that Naseer was hiding in a house near

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.daralhayat.com>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

Khost in eastern Afghanistan with a resistance group he had joined when he was arrested and that no struggle took place. They also claimed that the authorities found large quantities of weapons and money in the hideout. Pakistani sources, on the other hand, claimed that Naseer was arrested while driving a car from Peshawar to Miranshah, and that the Pakistani authorities informed the Americans of his arrest.<sup>7</sup>

### Iran

- On December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that NATO's ISAF forces had arrested a weapons smuggler in southern Afghanistan. At first it was assumed that the arrested man was a member of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force, but this claim was eventually retracted. It is suspected that the smuggler was responsible for transferring weapons between Iran and Kandahar.

In the same article, it was reported that the British "Times" newspaper had recently written about Iran's release of a number of senior Al-Qaeda members.<sup>8</sup> According to the British newspaper, Iran released the Al-Qaeda operatives in order to enable them to re-build the Islamic organization on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The newspaper quoted senior Pakistani officials who stated that the Iranian government, through the Revolutionary Guards, was assisting Al-Qaeda activists.

According to the article, Iran released Al-Qaeda's military leader, the Egyptian Saif Al-Adel, as well as other senior members of the organization such as Abu Al-Khair, who is on the list of Saudi Arabia's 85 most wanted men, and Abu Muhammad Al-Masri, an explosives specialist who was

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.daralhayat.com>

<sup>8</sup> Various reports in the Arabic media state that Iran released Saif Al-Adel, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, Mahfouz Walad Al-Walid, Saad bin Laden and others, a few months ago.

involved in the bombing of two American embassies in 1998. The latter is also suspected of managing Al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan. In addition, Iran released the Kuwaiti Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, who served as Al-Qaeda's spokesman during the 9/11 attacks, and three members of bin Laden's family, including Muhammad Abdullah Hassan Abu Al-Khair, who has been accused of acting as a senior finance official in the Al-Qaeda organization.

Noman Benothman, a former senior official of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group who is currently a researcher at the Quilliam Foundation, told "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" that many senior Al-Qaeda members escaped to Iran after the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and that some of the Egyptian fundamentalist groups had ties to Iran even before the 9/11 attacks. According to Benothman, many of the Afghanistan fighters left Iran for their countries of origin. However, around 100 activists stayed, and the recent release of some of the Al-Qaeda leaders demonstrates that Iran is using them as a bargaining chip. The release of the operatives followed the escalation of the conflict between Iran and Pakistan over the Jundallah organization, which Iran has accused Pakistan of aiding.<sup>9</sup>

#### Turkey

- On December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper quoted the AP press agency regarding the arrest of ten men suspected of being Al-Qaeda activists in Turkey. The men were believed to be planning attacks for New Year's Day.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

<sup>10</sup> <http://aawsat.com>

## Iraq

- On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported that the Iraqi security forces had thwarted a plot to carry out a large-scale attack against Shi'ite visitors in Karbala on the Day of Ashuraa. The Iraqi security forces arrested 80 suspects in Karbala and Northern Babil who were affiliated with 14 different terrorist cells. According to the security forces, the cells belonged to "Fityan Al-Jannah" (the Youth of Heaven), a group associated with Al-Qaeda.<sup>11</sup>
- On December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported a wave of arrests in Al-Anbar. 93 activists were arrested and large quantities of equipment and weapons were found and seized. The arrests were carried out with the cooperation of the army, the police, the Sahwa (Awakening) Councils and the various tribes. It was planned by the Ministry of Defense.<sup>12</sup>
- On December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sabah" newspaper reported that Sheikh Ahmad Abu Risha, the Secretary General of the Sahwa Council of Iraq, had survived an attempt on his life. According to a source from the Sahwa Council, someone claiming to be a businessman interested in investing in Ramadi arranged a meeting with Abu Risha. The man brought a laptop with him to the meeting and, when the guards attempted to inspect the laptop, the man tried to stop them, claiming it was a gift for Abu Risha and that he had to deliver it himself. The security guards ignored him and, upon inspection, discovered that it was booby-trapped.

The article further reported that the security forces had arrested 151 wanted men suspected of terrorist activities. Some of the arrested men were planning on attacking Shi'ites during their religious ceremonies. Among those

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<sup>11</sup> <http://international.daralhayat.com>

<sup>12</sup> <http://daralhayat.com>

arrested was a young girl who had intended to blow herself up with an explosives belt during a Shi'ite religious ceremony. Contradictory reports have surfaced regarding the girl's age; some reports claimed she was in her twenties, while others claimed that she was only 14 years old.<sup>13</sup>

- Throughout the second half of December 2010, the "Al-Sabah" newspaper reported suicide bombings and other types of attacks occurring in Iraq, some of which took place during Shi'ite ceremonies. In one of the attacks, a policeman sacrificed his own life to save the lives of participants in a ceremony by holding down a suicide bomber who was wearing an explosives belt. The policeman contained the blast from the explosion with his body.<sup>14</sup>
- On December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sabah" newspaper reported that the armed forces in Mosul, Iraq, had killed three Libyan terrorists who were preparing to perpetrate attacks over Christmas. According to the report, a Special Forces unit raided a house in construction which was being used as a hiding place for the terrorists. During the confrontation, the terrorists fired at the unit and threw three grenades at them. Three terrorists were killed during the operation. In the house, the unit found three explosive belts, six grenades, a pistol and documents. According to the army's reports, the terrorists arrived in Mosul on Saturday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010, and intended to carry out the attacks over Christmas.<sup>15</sup>
- On December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper quoted Western media sources which had reported that Iraq had warned the United States and certain European countries of plans to perpetrate suicide attacks against American and European targets over Christmas, information the Iraqi authorities had obtained from confessions of detainees. The attacks they

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.alsabaah.com>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.alsabaah.com>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.alsabaah.com>

warned about included the one subsequently carried out in Stockholm.<sup>16</sup> The "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" article further stated that Interpol in Baghdad had forwarded messages to American and European authorities which indicated that there was a possibility of cells carrying out orders given by the Al-Qaeda leadership to attack American and European targets. According to the article, Denmark was specifically mentioned as a possible target. In addition, the article quoted the Swedish media, which reported that it was possible the perpetrator of the Stockholm attack had collaborators as the tapes sent to the Swedish media contained the voices of at least two men. The article also quoted the Swedish media's report that the perpetrator may have had ties to the radical imam, Abu Hamza Al-Masri.<sup>17</sup>

- On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the Christians in Kirkuk had cancelled the ceremonies planned for Christmas due to threats ten priests had received from the 'War Office' of the "Islamic State of Iraq" organization. According to the threats, if the Christians did not comply with the Mujahideen's demands, they would pay a "heavy price".<sup>18</sup>
- On December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported that 14 to 17 people were killed in a suicide bombing attack in Ramadi in the Al-Anbar region. The sequence of the attack was as follows: a suicide bomber driving a vehicle with a car bomb detonated himself at the entrance to a complex of government offices, including the headquarters of the regional council and the police. This caused only a slight amount of damage but, a few minutes later, a second suicide bomber dressed in a police uniform blew himself up

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<sup>16</sup> See:

[http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWVG\\_Jihadi\\_Dialogue\\_Stockholm\\_Attack.pdf](http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWVG_Jihadi_Dialogue_Stockholm_Attack.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

amid the crowd of people who rushed to the scene to help the survivors of the first explosion.

The departing Regional Police Commander told "Al-Hayat" that Al-Qaeda is using a new tactic in which they employ a small preliminary bomb in order to draw as many people as possible to aid the wounded and they then explode a larger bomb, causing many more casualties. He added that this attack would force the security establishment in the region to reassess all their security plans in Ramadi, particularly those relating to official and government institutions.<sup>19</sup>

- On December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported on an attempt to assassinate a police commander in Mosul. The police commander was responsible for the pursuit of Al-Qaeda activists in Mosul the week prior to the "Al-Hayat" report. During the pursuit, one of the commanders of the "Islamic State of Iraq" was killed. The assassination attempt was carried out at the police headquarters in Mosul by two suicide bombers who were equipped with explosives belts and who apparently intended to assassinate the police commander personally.<sup>20</sup>

On December 30<sup>th</sup>, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper further expounded on the incident, reporting that the pathological findings revealed body parts of three suicide bombers who had blown themselves up in the office of the police commander, while a fourth suicide bomber was shot to death before he was able to enter the police commander's office.<sup>21</sup>

- On December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010 the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper published an article summarizing the security situation in Iraq in 2010. According to the article, hundreds of Christian families left their homes in Iraq for Kurdistan

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.daralhayat.com>

<sup>20</sup> <http://international.daralhayat.com>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

and for other countries following threats from the "Islamic State of Iraq" organization. The article further stated that the Iraqi security forces had recently achieved several successes in the fight against terrorism. However, despite these successes, over the course of the first ten months of 2010, terrorist attacks resulted in 3,444 casualties, 2,251 in bombings, 105 kidnappings and 706 people who died as a result of assassinations carried out by pistols with silencers. The article also mentioned that, according to senior security and government officials, hundreds of activists of the Awakening Councils have joined Al-Qaeda's ranks in Iraq, some of whom continue to receive salaries from the Iraqi government yet aid the rebels. The commentators credit this transition of the Councils' activists to their frustration with the Shi'ite government and the pressures from Al-Qaeda.<sup>22</sup>

- On December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper published statements made by Harem Kamal Agha, a member of the Leadership Council of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), regarding the terrorist attacks in Mosul. Agha stated that Al-Qaeda and the remaining members of the Baath party are renewing their operations in Mosul and that Baath elements have penetrated the security establishment in the region. He further stated that the security situation in the region is deteriorating and that Al-Qaeda is once again perpetrating attacks all over the region. Agha also mentioned the ineptness of the judiciary authority in the region, which makes counter-terrorism efforts more difficult.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> <http://aawsat.com>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

**The Arabian Peninsula:**Yemen

- On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper published an article in which it was stated that Fahd Al-Quso, also known as Abu Hudhaifa Al-Yamani, who was reported to have been killed in September 2010 on the Pakistani border, is still alive. Al-Quso is on the FBI list of most wanted dangerous terrorists and has been linked to the bombing of the American destroyer *USS Cole* in Aden in 2000.

An "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" reporter, Arafat Mudabish, met with Fahd Al-Quso in the Shabwa mountains region, where he was receiving protection from the Al-Awaliq tribes. During his interview with Mudabish, Al-Quso said that he was surprised to hear about the rumors of his death and that five people were killed in the bombing of his farm in Rafd in December 2009. Al-Quso also said that the Yemen government had asked him to surrender in exchange for promises and guaranties, but he had replied that he would give up neither his religion nor his principles.<sup>24</sup>

A profile of Al-Quso was published in another article in the same newspaper edition. According to this article, Al-Quso's real name is Fahd Muhammad Ahmad Al-Quso Al-Awlaki. The U.S. State Department has classified him as an international terrorist and, as part of Executive Order 13224, has added his name to the Consolidated List of the Sanctions Committee of U.N. Resolution No. 1267. The American authorities believe Al-Quso to be the leader of an Al-Qaeda cell in Yemen and to have ties to the Al-Qaeda leaders there, including Anwar Al-Awlaki, Nasir Al-Wahishi, and Said Al-Shihri. Al-Quso is also suspected of meeting with two of the 9/11 suicide bombers,

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

Nawaf Al-Hasmi and Khalid Al-Mihdhar, in Malaysia in 2000. He was arrested by the Yemen authorities after the 9/11 attacks. He managed to escape in 2003 but was re-arrested in 2004. He was sentenced to seven years in prison for blowing up the *USS Cole* destroyer and was released in 2007.<sup>25</sup>

- On December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the Yemen police had succeeded in thwarting a terrorist plot to attack American diplomats in Sana'a. The article explains that a 28 year-old Jordanian citizen, suspected of being an Al-Qaeda activist, was arrested outside of a pizzeria in the industrial zone of the city on Wednesday evening. Security officials suspected that the man intended to harm four U.S. embassy employees who were sitting in the restaurant. They arrested him while he was in a car parked near the pizzeria. Upon arrest, the security officials discovered in his possession explosives, a gun and forged identity papers. According to eyewitnesses, the man had been seen circling the restaurant in his car and had walked over to the American diplomats' car while they were inside the pizzeria. The assumption is that he was trying to hide an explosives device inside the diplomatic car.<sup>26</sup>

Two days later, on December 19<sup>th</sup>, "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" published another article which reported that, according to the AP Agency, the four American 'diplomats' were in fact CIA agents. However, according to the article, it is unlikely the would-be attacker was aware of this fact.<sup>27</sup>

- On December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the confrontations taking place in the Abyan region between the army and

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

the elements suspected of belonging to Al-Qaeda were continuing to result in many casualties on both sides.<sup>28</sup>

Two days prior to the publication, on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported that a Yemenite soldier had been killed in an attack in Ludar in the Abyan region. According to the reports, the attack was carried out as follows:

Armed Al-Qaeda operatives attacked a military vehicle following a food distribution truck. The attack occurred as the truck crossed a bridge in a mountainous area on the way to one of the military bases in the region. The Al-Qaeda men first detonated an initial explosives charge to draw the soldiers out of their vehicle. Once the soldiers descended from the vehicle to find the source of the explosion, they were ambushed and the Al-Qaeda operatives began firing on them from their hiding places. The Al-Qaeda operatives finally fired an RPG at the vehicle and escaped.<sup>29</sup>

On December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported that seven soldiers had been killed in another attack in Abyan. According to security sources, the armed men had been driving in two vans and on three motorcycles. They opened fire and threw several hand grenades at the guards of an army base while the soldiers were in the midst of Friday prayers. The attackers then escaped. The sources further stated that the attack had Al-Qaeda's "fingerprints" on it, as the organization had perpetrated several attacks in the Abyan region in which scores of soldiers were killed or wounded.<sup>30</sup>

- On the December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported that Al-Qaeda in Yemen had confirmed the death of Naif Al-Qahtani. This is the

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

<sup>29</sup> <http://international.daralhayat.com>

<sup>30</sup> <http://international.daralhayat.com>

second time he has been confirmed dead. Al-Qahtani was described by the organization as the founder of its propaganda machine in Yemen. According to Al-Qaeda in Yemen, Al-Qahtani had participated in the attack against Spanish tourists in Yemen, and had trained recruits to use various types of weapons and explosives. Informed sources told "Al-Hayat" that Al-Qahtani was afraid to move around and preferred to remain inside safe houses for long periods of time. These sources also told the newspaper that Al-Qahtani had lived in the Waila region of Yemen for 18 months, after which he moved to the organization's propaganda headquarters inside one of its houses in Marib. According to "Al-Hayat", the fact that Al-Qaeda in Yemen praises and glorifies its activists who are killed in battle indicates that the organization is vulnerable and is undergoing hardships.<sup>31</sup>

#### Saudi Arabia

- On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that, according to Mansur Al-Turki, the spokesman for the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Interior, 75% of the detainees from the 19 Al-Qaeda cells recently captured in Saudi Arabia<sup>32</sup> are under the age of 30 while 85% have no high school education and 40% have even less education. Al-Turki gave a lecture at the King Saud University entitled "The Deviating Group... Recruiting and Enticing Measures", in which he discussed the radical organizations' exploitation of the misguided understanding of the meaning of Jihad and of the religiously zealous Saudi Arabian youth in order to achieve their aims.

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<sup>31</sup> <http://ksa.daralhayat.com>

<sup>32</sup> See :

[http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWVG\\_Arab\\_Media\\_Sources\\_November\\_2010\\_2.pdf](http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWVG_Arab_Media_Sources_November_2010_2.pdf), pp. 13-17.

In his lecture, Al-Turki spoke about the connection between radical ideas and terrorism. According to the spokesman, the two factors influence each other in that radical ideas result in terrorist attacks and terrorist attacks result in radical ideas. Furthermore, he explained that the Muslim youth are so easily influenced by radical ideas due to their free time and lack of things to keep them busy. Al-Turki added that the family plays an important role in education the youth in the true meaning of Jihad in Islam.<sup>33</sup>

- On December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that preachers and imams who issued warnings against the Deviating Group, and the employees of the Ministry for Islamic Affairs in Riyadh had received threats against their lives from Al-Qaeda activists or people identified with the organization. The General Mufti of Saudi Arabia referred to the issue and stated that they must be on guard and report those who are behind these threats to the security officials.<sup>34</sup>
- On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, the Saudi Arabian press published an interview with Jabir Al-Fayfi, an Al-Qaeda activist who had recently surrendered to the Saudi authorities. The interview had been conducted on Saudi Arabian TV. In the interview, Al-Fayfi detailed his radicalization and the process that led him to embark on Jihad. He described how he had changed from a youth dreaming of playing football at the Al-Ahli club in Jeddah to a victim of radical ideology. The former Al-Qaeda activist related how he had sold his car in order to take part in the Jihad in Chechnya after training in Afghanistan. He also explained how he had moved around in the areas of conflict after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. He claimed that most of the Saudis in Afghanistan

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

were afraid to return to Saudi Arabia because the Jihadi leaders convinced them they would be punished and incarcerated if they did so.

Al-Fayfi explained that he was unemployed and was under mental pressure and, as a result, he became more and more religious. He spent a great deal of time listening to lectures and tapes on religion. He started to listen to tapes by renowned sheikhs who spoke about Jihad in general and he became more fervent in his desire to take part in Jihad. He met a number of people like himself at the mosque and they started to meet on a regular basis. On one occasion, one of them showed a tape on the Jihad in Chechnya, to which another person charged that "they only wanted to look at the tapes but did not want to leave for Jihad in Chechnya". At this point, Al-Fayfi began to consider leaving for Jihad. He believed that doing so would be a good opportunity to repent and to die a Shahid's death. He therefore sold his car and prepared to leave.

Al-Fayfi, accompanied by two others, left for Qatar and then for Pakistan in order to reach Afghanistan. Al-Fayfi remained in Afghanistan for nine months until the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and the American invasion of Afghanistan.<sup>35</sup> In the interview, Al-Fayfi explained that when he reached Afghanistan, Al-Qaeda was not yet well known, and that most of the people who arrived in Afghanistan wished to train in order to either join the Taliban or to go to Chechnya. During the bombing of Tora Bora and Jalalabad, most of the fighters in the frontlines were Saudis and Yemenites who were taking orders from the Taliban.

According to Al-Fayfi, every region had Amirs from Egypt, Algeria, Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Al-Fayfi was arrested together with many other activists;

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.alriyadh.com>

they were handed over to the Americans who sent them to the prison in Guantanamo Bay.<sup>36</sup> In an interview aired one week later and also published in the Saudi press, Al-Fayfi detailed his experiences in Guantanamo. He claimed that the Saudis in the prison, including himself, had moderate ideas until they came into contact with the detainees from North Africa and Europe, who instilled in them radical "Takfir" ideas.

Al-Fayfi also described the warm and supportive treatment he received from the Saudi Arabian government upon his return. Al-Fayfi maintained that, while he still held radical Jihadi ideas, particularly when he heard of the events in Iraq, they were not strong enough that he felt compelled to leave for Jihad until the events in Gaza. Al-Fayfi specifically mentioned Said Al-Shihri, who incited former detainees to leave on Jihad.<sup>37</sup>

- On December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the Saudi "Okaz" newspaper issued a report regarding the attack that took place on December 24<sup>th</sup> at a checkpoint in the south of Riyadh. According to the article, the attacker, who was called Al-Sheikh Nasr Al-Din Al-Baghdadi, was disguised as a woman when he carried out the attack. Al-Baghdadi was attempting to infiltrate Yemen to join Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The article further revealed that the attacker was linked to the Al-Qaeda network which had recently been dissolved by the Saudi security forces. Al-Baghdadi arrived at the checkpoint dressed as a woman and accompanied by a Saudi youth, who also wished to get to Yemen and who claimed that Al-Baghdadi was his mother. The two were captured at the checkpoint. However, Al-Baghdadi then fired on the security forces; he was killed in the exchange.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.al-jazirah.com>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.alriyadh.com>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.okaz.com.sa>

- On December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper published statements made by the General Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abd Al-Aziz Aal Al-Sheikh, during a telephone interview he gave to the newspaper in which he strongly criticized the recent trend of Al-Qaeda activists disguising themselves as women. According to the Sheikh, this tactic "contributed to the slandering of Islam" and was disrespectful to women.<sup>39</sup>

#### The Emirates

- On December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Bayan" newspaper reported that, according to the "The National" newspaper, which is a United Emirates newspaper published in English, two Pakistani brothers were arrested on suspicion of having ties to Al-Qaeda.

The brothers were arrested last April, following information received from the Pakistani authorities. They were accused of running a Jihadi organization in the Emirates and of creating a direct connection to a prominent leader in Al-Qaeda. The brothers also admitted to collecting funds and recruiting activists for Al-Qaeda during their interrogations, but they later claimed that their confessions were obtained by force.

In addition, the older brother was suspected of sending two laptops and other equipment to Islamic activists in Waziristan. The interrogators also found a message in Urdu on the older brother's laptop, which had been sent to the former No. 3 man in Al-Qaeda, Mustafa Abu Al-Yazid, who was killed in May 2010.<sup>40</sup>

In response to the affair, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper quoted Riad Kahwaji, a political commentator and the director of the Institute for Near

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<sup>39</sup> According to Islam, it is a sin for men to imitate women and vice versa.

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.albayan.ae>

East and Gulf Military Analysis (INEGMA), who stated: "It is not surprising that Al-Qaeda has a presence in the Emirates, as the organization is actually an ideology which moves from place to place with ease, and if someone adopts this ideology and coordinates with the leaders in the field, this is sufficient. Therefore, there is an Al-Qaeda presence everywhere...".<sup>41</sup>

### **The Al-Sham Region**

#### Palestine

- On December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Quds" Palestinian newspaper published an article on the Salafi Jihadi organizations in Gaza who criticize the Hamas movement and fire rockets into Israel, despite the calm Hamas is trying to maintain. According to the article, relations between Hamas and the Salafi groups have deteriorated since Hamas' security forces killed Abd Al-Latif Musa, the commander of the "Jund Ansar Allah" group, as well as 24 of his supporters, during a confrontation at the Rafiah mosque after Musa declared the establishment of an Islamic Emirate in Gaza in August 2009.

The article quoted Abu Al-Baraa Al-Masri, one of the Salafi groups' leaders, who explained that, since the attack on the mosque, the relationship between Hamas and the Salafi-Jihadi groups has been tense, and that Hamas has been arresting the groups' activists and is threatening their families to force them to surrender. Al-Masri specified the names of the Salafi groups: "Jund Ansar Allah", "Jaish Al-Islam", "Al-Tawhid Wal-Jihad", "Jaish Al-Umman" and "Ansar Al-Sunnah". According to Al-Masri, no ideological differences exist between these groups. Furthermore, Al-Masri stated that Hamas is making every effort to arrest the Jihadi fighters and that it tortures

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<sup>41</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

them even more than it tortures those collaborating with Israel. Al-Masri refused to provide details regarding the Salafi ties to Al-Qaeda in Gaza; however, he did state that "We stand beside our brethren in this organization led by Sheikh Osama bin Laden."

The article also quoted Abu Hamza Al-Sheikh Abu Al-Walid Al-Maqdisi, a leader of the "Ansar Al-Sunnah" group. Al-Maqdisi blamed Hamas for "the failure of the intensive efforts to merge the Salafi groups". However, he said that, despite the differences of opinion with Hamas, the groups have no wish to declare "Takfir" on Hamas. Al-Maqdisi added that the Salafi groups support the establishment of an Islamic Emirate, while Hamas does not. With regard to the groups' ties with Al-Qaeda, Al-Maqdisi explained that, while there were no direct ties at the moment, contact had been established between operatives in several different organizations. He stressed that this does not mean their positions are identical, militarily-wise or even as far as support is concerned.<sup>42</sup>

#### Jordan

- On December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the State Security Court in Jordan intends to examine the case against the Salafi ideologist, Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi, and three other men. The four have been accused of recruiting activists for the Taliban in Afghanistan, which is forbidden in Jordan as it could endanger the country, cause hostile activities, and undermine relations with a foreign country. The four have also been accused of recruiting activists and fundraising for terrorist organizations in order to knowingly perpetrate terrorist attacks. These activities are in

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<sup>42</sup> <http://www.alquds.com>

contravention of the law against money laundering and financing terrorism.

The trial is scheduled for the beginning of 2011.<sup>43</sup>

## The Maghreb

### The Maghreb – General

- On December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper reported that the security establishment of the Sahel states, which tracks the Sahara Emirates of the Al-Qaeda organization, is aware that smuggling is the main artery for the armed men in the area. Therefore, during their confrontations with Al-Qaeda, they enlist smugglers who have ties to the organization. They particularly enlist smugglers with ties to Mukhtat Balmukhtar who, according to security reports, has been operating with the smuggling networks for approximately 12 years, which makes him the No. 1 man in the organization in the Sahel region from Mauritania to Somalia.

According to the article, Algeria believes that mafia gangs have grown around Al-Qaeda and that they are the ones who deal with the Western hostages, particularly in the triangle border region between Algeria, Mali and Niger. The article stated that Al-Qaeda inherited the Tigharghar mountain region from the Tawariq tribal rebels. The Tigharghar mountain region constitutes a desert fortress as it is characterized by high mountains which serve as observation posts and countless streams, where many Al-Qaeda activists are entrenched. It is very difficult to reach this region with ground forces. Therefore, air power must be employed to carry out any operation against Al-Qaeda there. However, the Mali air force is not sufficiently trained for this purpose.

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<sup>43</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

The article further reported that the Sahel security forces are entertaining the idea of cooperating with former rebels from the Tawariq tribes. Al-Qaeda, on the other hand, is trying to recruit foreign elements in order to create an organization like the one headed by Osama bin Laden, just on a smaller scale. Algeria has specifically warned against this, fearing the organization will adopt a Jihadi character, which will become stronger as the West continues to attempt to demonstrate a presence in the region, and the situation will erupt into a military confrontation. The article also revealed that Algerian and Mauritanian forces are present in the area and that attempts have been made to coordinate with the Mujahideen in Somalia. Balmukhtar wishes to become the leader of the new organization, particularly in light of the fact that he is charismatic and is able to win the hearts of the tribal people due to the money he gives them.<sup>44</sup>

#### Algeria

- On December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Shuruk" newspaper reported the results of research carried out by the Institute of the Sahel and Sahara States for the Studies of Geo-Strategy and Strategy. According to the Institute's research, Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb suffered considerably from the attacks carried out by the Algerian security forces and is now putting all of its efforts into escaping from the security forces in the northern regions.

The Sahara regions outside of Algeria have also become a refuge for the terrorist activists. The research revealed that there were between 200 and 300 activists from the Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in the Sahel and Sahara region; the activists came from Algeria, Mauritania, Mali,

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<sup>44</sup> <http://daralhayat.com>

Nigeria and Burkina Faso. The research also pointed to the fact that the Sahel and Sahara region has become a logistics base from which the GSPC receives its money, weapons and supplies under the patronage of the local inhabitants.

The organization, as well as other movements, trains in the area between Mauritania, Chad, Algeria and Mali. Al-Qaeda cannot operate without the cooperation of the local inhabitants and therefore some of the organization's leaders, such as Balmukhtar, create family ties for sponsorship purposes. There are also ties between the organization and mafia gangs specializing in smuggling weapons and drugs, as they have mutual interests.<sup>45</sup>

- On December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Shuruk" newspaper reported that the Algerian security forces killed Abu Huraira, the Amir of the Al-Farouq company, as well as seven of his men. The operation was carried out approximately 18 kilometers west of the Jijel region while the men were on their way back to their strongholds, after the bad weather in the area had improved.<sup>46</sup>

#### Morocco

- On December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that Morocco's Ministry of Interior had published a policy paper in which it declared that the security establishment, responsible for fighting terrorism, had recently succeeded in breaking up a terrorist network comprised of six Moroccans who operated within a cyber terror framework. According to the policy paper, the members of the cell had acquired considerable knowledge on manufacturing explosives and were planning on using this knowledge to

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.echoroukonline.com>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.echoroukonline.com>

carry out terrorist attacks in various centers of conflict around the world. The cell members also intended to carry out attacks in Morocco itself, where they were planning on using booby-trapped vehicles against a number of western targets and security centers.<sup>47</sup>

- On December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that a hearing of six members belonging to a drug ring who had been apprehended in October<sup>48</sup> had begun in Morocco. The drug ring was comprised of 36 operatives and included four Spaniards. The members of the ring were accused of smuggling over 600 kilograms of cocaine to Morocco via the Algerian and Mauritanian borders between March and August 2010. They also smuggled foreign currency. The ring was run by Colombian and Spanish barons with close ties to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and to the cartels in Latin America.<sup>49</sup>

## Africa

### Africa – General

- On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported on a meeting of African leaders at the African Center for the Study and Research of Terrorism in the capital of Algeria. The meeting took place the day before the attempt to formulate an African Model Law to confront terrorism. The African Model Law is intended to ensure all African countries act against terrorism, even if they do not have specific laws against terrorism.

Ramadan Lamamra, the Commissioner of Peace and Security of the African Union, stated that legislation for confronting terrorism requires a

<sup>47</sup> <http://aawsat.com>

<sup>48</sup> See:

[http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWVG\\_Arab\\_Media\\_Sources\\_October\\_2010\\_2.pdf](http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWVG_Arab_Media_Sources_October_2010_2.pdf), pp. 14-16.

<sup>49</sup> <http://aawsat.com>

collaborative effort by all the African states. He also contended that the African countries lack the appropriate equipment for confronting terrorism. Some of the states do not even have the basic equipment to detect metal or forged documents. He added that African states expect the international community to support them, but at the same time they refuse Western security solutions to their problems.

The proposed law, which is scheduled to be passed at the Summit of the African Union in Addis Ababa in January 2011, includes outlawing the financing of terrorism and committing to extradite anyone involved in terror activities.<sup>50</sup>

#### Somalia

- On December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Jazeera" channel reported that Islamic Party activists had joined the "Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen" movement in the city of Luk. At the beginning of the month, another armed group of the Islamic Party had also joined the "Al-Shabab" movement in Burhakba.

At a press conference attended by Farhan Abdu, the supervisor of the Islamic Party in Luk, and by Bashar Adam Abdu, the governor of Luk and a member of the "Al-Shabab" movement, the former called for unification against the infidels and those who have forsaken Islam.

The city of Luk is a strategic center in the west of Somalia, as it is situated on the border with Ethiopia. At the press conference, Bashar Adam Abdu, on behalf of the "Al-Shabab" movement, expressed his agreement with the idea of unification and stated that "our unity is a strong defeat for our enemies and a joy for the Mujahideen".

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<sup>50</sup> [www.aawsat.com](http://www.aawsat.com)

The "Al-Jazeera" website reported that, according to its sources in the Islamic Party, the Party's members are unhappy with the arrival of "Al-Shabab" fighters at the entrance to the city of Afgooye, which is considered to be the Party's stronghold. The sources told the website that crucial meetings are being held between the Party and the movement regarding their final merger.<sup>51</sup>

On December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Jazeera" website reported the official merger of the "Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen" movement and the Islamic Party. This merger occurred following the U.N. Security Council's decision to increase the number of African Union soldiers in Somalia from 8,000 to 12,000. The website published segments from a press conference in Mogadishu, in which the spokesman of the "Al-Shabab" movement announced the merger of the two movements and stated: "We warn the forces of Uganda and Burundi, as well as their nations, that we will double our attacks". The spokesman added: "We hereby inform our brothers in Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Uganda that we have merged under one name, which is Al-Shabab".

- On December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Jazeera" website reported that the supporters of the "Al-Shabab" movement and Islamic Party celebrated the merger of the two organizations in Mogadishu with a ceremony attended by the leader of the former Islamic Party, Hassan Dahir Aweys. Aweys praised the union and said that the war against the African Forces was "Jihad, and it is like a prayer, a personal commandment imposed on every person".

During the ceremony, Fuad Mohammad Khalaf, one of the leaders of the "Al-Shabab" movement, called on the Islamic forces in Iraq to unite 'under the

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<sup>51</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.net>

Islamic State of Iraq', in order to strengthen themselves. He also called for the unification of the Islamic forces in Yemen. Furthermore, Khalaf stated that President Obama must convert to Islam. Quoting from the Islamic traditions, Khalaf warned that if Obama does not, his fate will be the same as the fate of Heraclius, Emperor of the Byzantine Empire who, according to Islamic tradition, did not answer Mohammad's call to convert to Islam and was eventually defeated by the Muslim armies.<sup>52</sup>

- On December 17<sup>th</sup> and December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Jazeera" website reported that the battles between the "Al-Shabab" movement and the Somali government and African Union Forces were continuing in Mogadishu. The website also reported that a roadside explosive device had killed six soldiers and one civilian in the capital.<sup>53</sup>
- The governor of the Islamic Juba region, Abu Bakr Ali Adam, spoke of the merger between the "Al-Shabab" movement and the Islamic Party, stating "our union today, with the help of Allah, will be the beginning of a merger between all the Mujahideen in the Islamic world and another step towards the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate. I say to the enemies of Allah, expect from us only those things which will harm you, as we will increase the painful strikes against you".

Furthermore, the governor of Kismayo, Hassan Yaaqub Ali, gave a speech in honor of the unification. In his speech, he declared that all the soldiers in the region are wearing the same uniforms, they are all under one leadership and their guns are all turned towards one enemy. He further stated that "the

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.net>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.net>, <http://www.alquds.co.uk>

unification of the Mujahideen is genuine" and it encompasses all the fields: military, political and religious.<sup>54</sup>

- On December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Jazeera" website reported that Mukhtar Abd Al-Rahman Abu Al-Zubair, the Amir of "Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen", had given a speech which was recorded and published in the Somali media, in which he stated: "there is a new subversive plan in Djibouti to destabilize the security and thwart the imposition of Islamic Sharia law in the country". Al-Zubair praised the merger of the "Al-Shabab" movement and the Islamic Party and said that the union will be upheld by taking the right path based on the uniqueness of the Lord and Jihad, by cleansing society of its defects, by creating true brotherhood between the Jihadi fighters, by disseminating good virtues, and by reviving the ideology of "Al-Wala Wal-Bara" – Loyalty and Disavowal.

In his speech, the Amir cautioned against tribalism, which according to him could destroy the unity, and called for sacrifice and benevolence in times of distress. He called on all to participate in the Jihad for Allah. He also spoke of the drought and called for mutual aid and for giving assistance to the poor and to those harmed by the drought. In addition, the Amir called for education, health care and the creation of employment in the regions governed by the "Al-Shabab" movement.<sup>55</sup>

- On December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Jazeera" channel broadcasted a program dedicated to the union of "Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen" and the Islamic Party. During the program, Amani Al-Tawil, an expert on African Affairs at the Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, explained that this merger

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<sup>54</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.net>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.net>

was to be expected due to the military defeats the Islamic Party had recently suffered and the similarity between the agendas of both organizations.

Al-Tawil contended that the "Al-Shabab" movement controls about half or more of Somalia and that, together with the presence of Al-Qaeda in Yemen, "we are experiencing an important development". According to Al-Tawil, the battles between the "Al-Shabab" movement and the government will only become worse. Omar Al-Sheikh Idris, a Somali Member of Parliament and adviser to the Somali President, also appeared on the program and shared his prediction that the merger would lead to increased internal struggles in the "Al-Shabab" movement. He bases this prediction on the known fact that disagreements and differences exist regarding the way the leaders and activists of the Islamic Party were integrated into the "Al-Shabab" movement.<sup>56</sup>

### **The West and the rest of the world**

#### Denmark

- On December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Hayat" newspaper quoted Western press agencies who had reported the arrest of four activists suspected of trying to perpetrate terrorist attacks against a Danish newspaper that had published caricatures insulting the Prophet Mohammad. The detainees were suspected of plotting to break into the paper's editorial offices in Copenhagen and kill as many people as possible. The detainees include a 44 year-old Tunisian, a 29 year-old Swede of Lebanese origin, a 30 year-old Swede, and a 26 year-old Iraqi who was seeking political asylum. The four would-be attackers resided in Sweden and entered Denmark on the night of December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010. They

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.net>

have been described as radical Islamists with ties to international terror networks.<sup>57</sup>

#### Britain

- On December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010, the Arabic media quoted Western press agencies regarding the capture of 12 terrorists in Britain, the majority of whom came from Bangladesh.<sup>58</sup> On December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010, it was further reported that the detainees were suspected of planning to perpetrate attacks in London against the "Big Ben", the American embassy and Westminster Cathedral.<sup>59</sup>

#### United States of America

- On December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper quoted CNN, who had reported that Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula was planning on poisoning food in American hotels and restaurants.<sup>60</sup>

#### Australia

- On December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" newspaper reported that the courts in Melbourne had convicted three Muslims the day before. The Muslims were of Lebanese and Somali origin and were convicted of planning to perpetrate a suicide attack against the Holsworthy army base in Sydney in 2009. Some of the convicted men were in contact with armed groups in Somalia. Their plan was to send a group of men armed with pistols and automatic weapons into the military base to shoot at everyone they saw and to continue shooting until they themselves were killed. Before their arrest,

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<sup>57</sup> <http://international.daralhayat.com>

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

<sup>59</sup> <http://aawsat.com>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>

one of the detainees had traveled to Somalia in order to obtain a religious ruling to perpetrate the attack. The Somali "Al-Shabab" movement denied any connection to the planned attack.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com>